


THE *Hbh. 1005*  
**SAINTS**  
**TEMPTATIONS,**  
**WHEREIN**

The { **NATURE,**  
**KINDS,**  
**OCCASION of TEMPTATION,**  
And the Duty of the Saints under Temptation are laid forth.



**AS ALSO**  
The Saints Great Fence against Temptation, *viz.* Divine Grace:

**WHEREIN**  
The Nature, Excellency, and Necessity of the Grace of God is displayed in several Sermons.

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By **John Rowe**, Minister of the Gospel.

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## TO THE READER.

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**W***Hat the Power, or rather Impotency of Free-will is, may be clearly seen in the Angels that fell, who being at first created with perfect freedom of will, did not yet keep their first estate. And also it may be seen in our first Parents, who by ill using of Free-will, lost themselves and their Free-will, as Austin expresseth it. Apparet itaque nobis in nostro capite ipse sors Gratie nude secundum uniuscuiusque mensuram se per cuncta ejus membra diffundit. August. de Prædest. sanct. cap. 15.*

*On the other hand, what the Power and Efficacy of Divine Grace is, and the transcendent excellency of it above the will of man, doth nowhere more clearly and illustriously appear than in our Head the Lord Jesus, who, as he was Man, depending upon the Fountain of Grace*

(\*)

in

## To the Reader.

J. h. 6. 57.

*Propter naturam  
Divinitatis vi-  
tam vivebat gra-  
tie & Glorie ;  
&c. Tolet.*

in Joh. 6.

*In Christo anima  
quidem est hy-  
pocritæ carnis,  
sed tamen hy-  
pocritæ a Ver-  
itate.*

Damasce.

Joh. 1. 15.

Joh. 6. 57.

Gal. 2. 20.

Joh. 17. 23.

*in the Deity ; and living not meerly up-  
on the stock of created principles : But  
( as Himself telleth us ) living by the  
Father ( his humanity in its operations  
being influenced and governed by the  
Divinity inhabiting in him ) was kept  
from all sin, and the least inclination to  
it, and carried on in a way of perfect  
obedience unto the end of his life. And  
as the holiness and happiness of Christ  
as he is man flows from the union of  
his humane nature with the Deity, and  
the Grace which it receiveth from it :  
so the holiness and happiness of Believers  
and their perseverance in both depends  
upon their spiritual and mystical union  
with Christ, and the influence of Grace  
they receive from him. Of his fulness  
have all we received, and Grace for  
Grace. And the Text before in part  
hinted, speaks fully to this ; As the  
living Father hath sent me, and I live by  
the Father ; so he that eateth me shall  
live by me. Hence also is that of Paul,  
Christ liveth in me. And also those other  
words of our Saviour, I in them, and  
thou in me.*

*It is too natural unto the sons of men,  
as to seek a Righteousness in themselves,  
so to suppose some strength and ability in  
them-*

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*themselves to work it out, and to attain unto it. But the Gospel is directly opposite unto this humour of corrupt nature; the whole scope and design of it being to shew, that both mans righteousness and strength lies perfectly out of himself: In the Lord have we righteousness and strength. And, In the Gospel is the righteousness of God revealed from Faith to Faith. And, We are not sufficient of our selves to think any thing as of our selves, but our sufficiency is of God.*

Isa. 45. 24.  
Rom. 1. 17.  
2 Cor. 3. 5.

*The principal thing intended in these Sermons is to commend the Grace of God, and to set forth the excellency and necessity of it; and what is treated of in the former Part of the Book is preparatory and leading thereunto.*

*And thus I may say, That what I have Preached, and is here represented in these Sermons, I have had experience of the Truth of, throughout the greatest part of my life; especially in several sicknesses, and many infirmities, with which the most wise and holy God hath pleased to exercise me in the course of my Pilgrimage. For what ever we may suppose our own strength, ability, and attainments to be, when we come to be under*

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exercise and affliction, then shall we soon perceive that we are Nothing without present actual Grace. When the hand of God is upon us in any special Tryal, then shall we find that we cannot fetch in that comfort from former experiences, as we would think we might easily do, nor support our selves under such a Tryal, nor put forth any one Act of Faith or obedience, without new supplies of present actual Grace. And thus doth Christs strength come to be perfected in our infirmity.

Alvarez de  
Auxiliis Gratie,  
libr. 6. Disp. 54.

Joh. 15. 5.

Prov 28. 26.  
Eccl. 17. 7.

It is confessed by a sober moderate Papist, That Man in his fallen estate cannot resist greater temptations, without the special help of the Grace of God. But the Scripture goes much farther when it telleth us, That without Christ we can do nothing; No, not so much as the least thing. And when we are taught to pray, Lead us not into temptation; it is supposed that every Temptation will be too hard for us, if Divine Grace do not help us. Let no man therefore presume on his own sufficiency, when an hour of temptation cometh, he may soon experiment what his own strength or rather infirmity is. He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: But Blessed is the

## To the Reader.

the man that trusteth in the Lord; *our* greatest strength and security lieth in dependence, and he will be found the happiest person at last, that depends most. Abide in me, *is the Counsel of* Joh. 15. 4.  
*him who is, and is called the wisdom of*  
God.

*The Doctrine of Grace hath met with many Adversaries; and many Controversies, both formerly and of late, thorough the malice and subtilty of him who is the Arch-enemy of Grace, have been raised concerning it: I have not lanch'd far into any Polemical Discourse about it, but contented my self for the most part with asserting the Doctrine of Grace in General, endeavouring to accommodate it unto practice, this way of Handling it, being most suitable to the Auditory I was to Preach unto. What is here Delivered in a plain and familiar manner, such who are acquainted with their own hearts, and who have their Senses exercised in spiritual things, will, I trust, find to be the Truth of God; And what ever benefit any may receive by these sermons of Grace (the Design of which is to commend and Illustrate the*  
*the*

## To the Reader.

*the Grace of God) that it may be  
wholly Ascribed to the Glory of Grace,  
is earnestly desired by him who is,*

Thine,

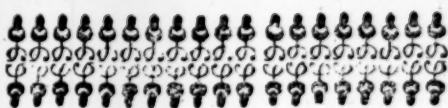
in the Lord Jesus,

*John Rowe.*

## ERRATA.

Page 102. line 28. read *Souveraign*, p. 106. l. 9. for  
*joyed* r. *joyned*, p. 138. l. 22. r. *might depart*, p. 143.  
l. 29. r. *proper*, p. 149. l. 23. r. *apt to think*, p. 163. l.  
28. r. *actually*, p. 212. l. 15. r. *elevates*, p. 241. l. 14. r.  
*so vast a*, p. 242. l. 3. for *dost* r. *doth*, p. 357. l. 23. for  
*cause* r. *caused*, p. 366. l. 11. for *you* r. *your*, p. 380. l. 5.  
for *on* r. *once*, p. 393. l. 14. for *Sperm* r. *Spring*.

SER-



# SERMON I.

2 Cor. 12. 7, 8, 9.

*And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.*

*For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.*

*And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*

**I**N this whole context we have four things observable:

1. We have Pauls exercise, the Temptation and Conflict that he was under; there was given unto me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me. These words describe

A 2 unto



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unto us the *exercise* or *conflict* that the Holy Apostle was under.

The second thing remarkable in the words is this, We have the *ground* and *occasion* of this *exercise* and *conflict* of his, and that was the danger that he was in of being lifted up, *lest I should be exalted through the abundance of revelations, there was given unto me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me.*

3. We have *Pauls carriage* under this temptation, and the course he took when he was tempted, at the eighth verse, *For this thing I besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me.*

Fourthly and Lastly, We have the gracious answer that he had to his prayer at the ninth verse. *And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*

There are several Observations that do naturally arise out of the Text.

The first Observation or Doctrine is this,

*Observ. 1.* That it is the lot of the holiest men, and of the most eminent servants of God, to be exercised with grievous and sore temptations; *there was given un-*



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*to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me.*

The second Observation that ariseth out of the words is this,

*That men of the highest grace, of the Observ. 2. greatest holiness, are yet in danger of Spiritual Pride, and of being lifted up above measure.*

*Lest I should be exalted above measure, saith the Apostle, there was given unto me a thorn in the flesh; a messenger of Satan to buffet me.*

Paul was an Apostle, a man of more than ordinary grace, and yet he was in danger of spiritual Pride; lest I, should be exalted above measure; there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me.

The third Observation that ariseth out of the Text is this,

*That the principal end why God Observ. 3. permits it, and orders it to be so, that his people should be tempted and undergo sore conflicts, it is to keep them from being lifted up.* Lest I should be exalted above measure, there was given unto me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me.

It is observable that the end of this exercise of Paul is repeated twice:

in the beginning of the verse, *lest I should be exalted above measure*, so in the end of the verse, *lest I should be exalted above measure*; I say this is twice repeated, intimating thus much, that the principal end that God aimed at in this dispensation of his towards *Paul*, it was to keep him humble and suppress Spiritual Pride in him.

The fourth Observation or Doctrine that is contained in the words is this,

*Observ. 4.* That the proper course that is to be taken when we are under temptation, is to pray much. *For this thing I besought the Lord thrice*; I besought the Lord *thrice*, that is often, a certain number for an uncertain; *thrice*, that is many times.

The fifth Observation that ariseth out of the Text is this,

*Observ. 5.* That praying souls shall have a sufficiency of grace to carry them through all their trials, conflicts and temptations. *And he said, My grace is sufficient for thee.*

The last Observation contained in the words is this,

*Observ. 6.* That Gods strength is made perfect in our weakness, *for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*

All these Observations are points of great moment. I shall begin to speak of the first of these Doctrines, and that is this,

Doct. 1. *That it is the lot of the holiest men, and of the most eminent Servants of God to be exercised with grievous and sore temptations.* This I gather from those words, *there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me.* There was given to me a thorn in the flesh. It is much controverted by Interpreters, what this *thorn in the flesh* should be, and they have several conjectures about it, some conceive it to be one thing, some another. I shall not trouble you with the several opinions and conjectures about it, I rather incline to what *Calvin* conceives to be the meaning of these words. He conceives by this *thorn in the flesh* is not meant so much one particular temptation, as temptations of all sorts and kinds; it was not one or two, or a few temptations only that *Paul* was exercised with, but he was exercised with variety of temptations, with all sorts and kinds of temptations; and by the *flesh*, *Calvin* understands not the body,

Doct. 1.

Ego sub hoc vocabulo comprehendi arbitror omnes gentes tentationis, quo Paulus exercebat r. Calvin. in loc.

but the *unregenerate* part in *Paul*, *Paul* himself had an *unregenerate* part in him, as well as a *regenerate*, and in respect of that *unregenerate* part in him, he was still subject to temptations.

*Paul* himself had not attained to that *spirituality*, but he had so much of the *unregenerate* part in him that did expose him to temptations. This *thorn in the flesh* is called the *messenger of Satan*, there was given to me a *thorn in the flesh*, the *messenger of Satan* to buffet me. Why the messenger of Satan? The reason is, because as temptations are injected by Satan, so when ever a temptation ariseth, it should put us in remembrance who it is that we have to deal with.

When ever a temptation comes, we ought to remember that Satan is near at hand, he is the author of the temptation, he is the enemy that we have to deal withal, and we should not be secure having such a subtil and malicious enemy to deal with.

Now this messenger of Satan it was sent to buffet *Paul*, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me. It is an emphatical expression, that he might buffet

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set me, the greek word signifies to beat another with the fist : now you know that is an Ignominious thing ; when a person is beaten with the fist *black* and *blew*, when his face is marr'd, it is a shameful reproachful thing, when a mans face is buffeted and his visage marred by it, he is ashamed to come into company, it strikes shame into him. So *Pauls* temptations struck him into a *holy shame*, his temptations were a means to fill him with a sense of his own *infirmities*, and take down all high conceits of himself, to shew him what he was in case he were left to himself.

Κολαρίζω  
πυγμα πάλιν  
κόλασθαι  
πληγὴ ἢ δόξα  
δομεν δὲ  
τῷ μέσῳ  
δακτύλῳ.  
Phavo imus.

Now if such a man as *Paul* was, a man of his grace and experience, no less than an *Apostle*, if he were exercised with these temptations, then we see it is the lot of the most eminent servants of God to be exercised with most grievous and sore temptations.

For the handling this *point*, there are three things to be spoken unto in the Doctrinal part.

1. I shall shew what Temptation is, open a little the nature of *Temptation*.
2. Shew you what the several *sorts* and *kinds* of *Temptation* are.

And

And then thirdly, We shall come to the *Grounds and Reasons* of the Doctrine, why it is that God trains up his Children under this *discipline*, why it is that he suffers them to be exercised under grievous and sore Temptations.

1. I shall open the nature of Temptations; what is Temptation?

For the nature of it in General you may take it thus; Temptation it is that *proof or experiment that is taken concerning a person for the discovery of mans weakness, and the Illustration of Gods power.* This is the *Definition* of Temptation.

The nature of Temptation may be known by the consideration of the *formal* and *final* cause of it, the *formal* cause of Temptation is the *experiment or proof* that is taken concerning a person.

*Tentare, est  
probare, sive  
experimentum  
sumere de ali-  
q: o.*

To *tempt*, it is to *prove* or take an *experiment* concerning another; to *tempt*, it is to put things to the *trial*, to make things *evident* concerning a person, how things stand with him. Now the end of Temptation being to *make known* something that was not made known before, we must understand this aright.

That

That which is made known by Temptation, it is not any thing to God, for God knows all things from eternity, *he knew what was in man*, John 2. 25. But that which is made known by Temptation, it is something to our *selves* and *others*, something by Temptation is made known to our selves and others that was not known before; and this is the Nature of Temptation to discover something to our selves and others that was not so clearly known and understood before. And Temptations give us an *experimental knowledge* of a thing; that which we knew only *conjecturally* and *opinionatively* before, when we come to be Tempted we have an *experimental knowledge* of that thing. And hence it is that the *Schoolmen* distinguish between that knowledge which is acquired by *reason* and *discourse*, and that which is gotten by *experience*. We may know many things by reason and discourse; now it is one thing to know things by reason and discourse, and another thing to know things *experimentally*, an *experimental knowledge* is the most certain knowledge of things: Now this is the formal cause of Temptation, that it is the *experiment* or *proof* which is taken

ken concerning a person. As for the *final* cause of Temptation, that is twofold.

1. The *discovery* of mans *weakness*, or *infirmity*.

2. The *Illustration* of *Divine* Power.

1. One great end of Temptation is, the *discovery* of our own *infirmity*; we never come to know what we are, till we come to be under Temptation; we think our strength is greater than it is till we come to be tempted, we think we can do more than we can do, we think we can master such a difficulty, overcome such a corruption, perform such a duty, withstand such an allurements; but when a Temptation comes, then our weakness and infirmity is soon seen. Now this is one end of Temptation to discover to man his weakness and infirmity.

Thus we find how the Lord led his people through the wilderness to *humble* them and *prove* them, Deut. 8. 16. *who fed thee in the wilderness with Manna, which thy Fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end.* And so in the third verse of that Chapter, and verse 2. *And thou shalt remember all the way*  
which



## The Nature of Temptation.

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which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, &c.

Thus God proved *Hezekiah* that he might know what was in his heart, 2 Chron 32. 31. *Howbeit, in the business of the ambassadors of the Princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to enquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart.*

The meaning is, that *Hezekiah* might know what was in his own heart; God knew what was in his heart before, but God left him under this Temptation that he might know all that was in his own heart.

2. The other end of Temptation is the *Illustration* of Divine Power. God therefore suffers us to be under Temptation, that he might manifest his power in supporting us under Temptation; this is exprest a little after the text, *my strength is perfected in infirmity.*

By Temptations we have experience of our own *weakness*, and of *Divine Power*; when a Temptation comes, then we find we have no ability in our selves to withstand it (though before the Tem-

## The Nature of Temptation.

Temptation came we thought we were strong enough) and then God puts forth his power to inable us to do what we could not do of our selves, and so Divine Power is Illustrated.

After God hath shewn us what we cannot do of our selves, then he shews us what his Divine Grace can inable us to do: hence is that expression that follows in the text, *most gladly will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

The *sense* of our infirmity makes way for the manifestation of Divine Power. When God hath shewn us by Temptation what we cannot do, then he shews us what his grace can do in us and for us; and this is the nature of Temptation. Temptation it is the proof or experiment that is taken concerning a person for the manifestation of his weakness and Illustration of Divine power.

The second thing to be spoken unto is, to shew what are the several sorts or kinds of Temptation.

There are four *sorts* or *kinds* of Temptation that we may distinguish of.

1. Some that we may call *Divine* Temptations.

2. Car-

## The Kinds of Temptation.

13

2. *Carnal or Fleſhly* Temptations.

3. There are *worldly* Temptations.

4. and Laſtly, there are *Satanical* Temptations.

1. There are ſome which are called *Divine Temptations*, ſuch as proceed immediately from God himſelf, Gen.

22. 1. *After theſe things God did tempt Abraham*; here you ſee there was a *Divine Temptation*: now theſe Temptations that we call *Divine Temptations* and do proceed from God, are not

to be underſtood ſo as if God did tempt to ſin, *God cannot be tempted with evil, neither doth he tempt any man*, that is, he doth not tempt any man to ſin, *Jam.*

1. 13. Theſe Temptations therefore that we call *Divine Temptations*, are nothing elſe but thoſe trials which God brings upon his Children for the exerciſe of their graces. When God brings his people into ſome notable ſtreight, or difficulty, or affliction, that they know not which way to turn or wind themſelves out of it, this is that which is properly called a *Divine Temptation*, and theſe trials are therefore called *Temptations*, becauſe by theſe Diſpenſations God tries his people what they are, and what their ſtrength, or rather

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rather what his grace in them is, under such a streight, and difficulty, and distress they are brought into. Thus God tried *Abraham, David, Job*, and other of his Saints.

2. There are *carnal or fleshly* Temptations. Now those Temptations that we call carnal or fleshly Temptations, they are such Temptations that arise out of mans own heart, *Jam. 1. 14. Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lusts and enticed. Original sin*, that is, that pravity and corruption of nature that is in us, is here called by the name of *lust*: now this pravity of nature, this draweth us away and *enticeth* us, there is that corrupt nature in us, which as it is in its self a sin, so it is a Temptation to sin. Corrupt nature provokes and *sollicits* us to sin: *In me, that is, in my flesh there dwells no good thing. In the flesh, that is in corrupt nature, there is no good thing, nay in the flesh dwells every evil thing, I find a Law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members*, *Rom. 7. 23.*

## The Kinds of Temptation.

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Now this is that we understand by fleshly Temptations, namely, the inclinations that are in our hearts to sin.

Original Sin consists of these two parts.

1. Of that indisposition and averfeness that is in us to good.

2. Of that propension or proneness that is in us unto evil.

Now there is an *habitual inclination*, and an *actual inclination* unto evil; and that *actual inclination* in us unto evil, it is the budding of Original Sin; it is the exerting or putting forth of that *habitual inclination* that is in us. Now the exerting and putting forth of Original Sin in actual inclinations, this is that which is properly called fleshly or carnal Temptations. The Schooimen call this the *impulse of sensuality*, they also call it the *first motions* that arise in the heart tending to sin.

It is a good expression of *Austin*, *Nemo se palpet de no, sibi satanas est.*  
*Let no man stroke or applaud himself,*  
*let no man think himself better than he*  
*is, every man is a Satan, a Tempter to himself.* Every man hath that in himself, which is a Temptation to himself. And, these *first inclinations* that are in the heart to sin, are properly called

B

Tem-

*Temptations*, because these first inclinations have an alluring quality, a proneness in them, to draw men to sin in act. Corrupt nature is apt to gratifie it self in its own desires : and when corrupt nature discovers its inclination to a sin, this is a strong Temptation to every unregenerate person, and he knows not how to resist it. Hence is it said of unregenerate men, that they *fulfil the desires of the flesh and of the mind*, Ephes. 2. 3. that is, that way that the flesh would have them go they will go. When the flesh is bending and inclining to such a thing, that way they will bend and incline. And *Regenerate persons* themselves, though they have a contrary principle of grace that doth oppose, yet these corrupt risings and inclinations that arise from Original sin within them, are a great incentive to them, and unless they are assisted by actual grace, they are many times overcome in particular acts. *That Temptation*, saith one, *that ariseth from the flesh within*, is *fortified and strengthened by our selves against our selves*, and therefore these fleshly Temptations, these Temptations that arise from corrupt nature, that fountain of Original sin which is in us, are

*Tentatio à carne  
interius om-  
pugnans de no-  
stro contra nos  
roboratur.*



are the strongest of all Temptations, and we are most apt to be overcome by them.

3. There are *worldly Temptations*, 1 John. 2. 16. *For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world.*

It is as much as if it had been said, This *world*, through mens corruption, is an occasion of nothing else but temptation to men. All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world. It is as much as if it had been said, The *world*, it tempts men with the Temptations of pleasure, of profit and honor; the variety of objects that are in the world, the variety of conditions that are in the world are Temptations to men. Prosperity hath its Temptations, and Adversity hath its Temptations. I remember it is a notable passage which *Austin* hath, Wo to the prosperities of this world, a first, and a second time. First, from the fear men have of adversity whilst they are in prosperity; Secondly, from the corruption that ariseth from prosperity. When men are in prosperity they fear changes, and pro-

*Ve prosperi-  
tibus huius sa-  
culi semel &  
ita um ad mo-  
re aduersitatis,  
& a corruptio-  
ne letitia;*

*Veritas fra-  
tibus suis se-  
mel, iterum &  
tertio, &c.*

*Non via est  
tentatio huma-  
na vitæ se-  
tentatio*

*Ὁ πειράζων.*

*Acts 5. 3.*

prosperity it self hath a great deal of corruption attending of it. And then saith he, Wo to adversity, a first, second and third time. Adversity is evil upon a treble account. First, from the desire men have of prosperity, when they are under adversity. Secondly, because adversity it self is a hard thing to be born. And lastly, when men are under adversity their patience is in danger of suffering shipwarck: and hence he concludes, *is not the whole of mans life a Temptation* upon earth? There is no state or condition we can be in, but there is some temptation or other attends it. We think if we were in such and such a condition, we should have no Temptations, but that is a mistake, there is no condition we can be in but will afford some Temptation or other.

4. There are *Satanical Temptations*, and these Temptations are such as come *primarily* and *originally* from *Satan* himself, Satans name is *The Tempter*. It is Satans proper work to tempt men to sin. Therefore it is said of Satan that he put it into the heart of Judas to betray his Master. And Peter saith to Ananias, *why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy-Ghost?* These are

## The Kinds of Temptation.

19

are *Satanical Temptations*, that come directly from *Satan*. Now these Temptations that proceed from *Satan*, they are *Infinite* and *Numberless*. *Satan* hath *various waies* of tempting, sometimes we read of the *fiery darts* of the Devil, sometimes we read of his *wiles*, sometimes we read of his *devices*, sometimes we read how he *transforms* himself into an *Angel of light*. *Satan* hath many ways of *assaulting* the Saints, sometimes he assaults them by the injection of *Blasphemous thoughts*, and these are so terrible to some of the Saints that they are weary of their lives; sometimes by the *injection* of *impure thoughts*, sometimes he assaults them by *cruel Temptations*, tempting them to things that are against nature, and contrary to nature, as to self murder and the like; sometimes he *transforms* himself into an *Angel* of light, and *counterfeits* the voice of the *spirit* of *God*; and the best way to discover these Temptations, it is by comparing them with the word. Whatever *Satan*s pretence is, his design is always to take us off from the word, and to reduce us to believe or practise something that hath not a warrant in the word for it.

B 3

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Therefore we may take this for a rule.

How plausible soever the Temptation is, if it hath not a warrant from the word, it comes from Satan who transforms himself into an Angel of light.

But Satans usual and ordinary way of tempting is, by suiting his Temptations to our corrupt nature. Satan observes which way our corrupt nature bends, and inclines, and suits his Temptations accordingly.

Thus have I now opened the Doctrine, and have shewn what Temptation is in general, and also the several sorts and kinds of Temptation.

The next thing that comes to be spoken unto is, the *Grounds* and *Reasons* of the point.

Why God suffers his people to be thus exercised with grievous and fore Temptations.

1. One Reason lies in the text, it is to *humble his people, lest I should be exalted above measure through abundance of revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me.* Temptation is the *Physick* or *Medicine* that God useth to keep his people from pride. How  
great

great is the poyson of pride, that can be cured by nothing else but poyson: So great an enemy is God to pride, that he sometimes lets his people fall into temptation, yea sometimes into other sins, to keep them from pride; but of this more in its proper place.

*O quantum est  
venerum sper-  
bie quod non  
potest nisi vex-  
no curari.*

2. Another Reason why God suffers his people to be exercised by Temptation, it is to keep them from *security*; when temptations are absent we are apt to be secure, and let fall our watch. Now God by letting loose Temptations upon us, admonisheth us of the danger we are in. We are little sensible of the danger we are in of being overtaken with such and such sins. God suffers a Temptation to break in upon us, and then he lets us see, that unless we watch and pray, we may soon enter into Temptation.

3. God suffers us to be tempted to quicken our *dependence* upon himself, and to cause us to run to him. When we are free from Temptation, we presume of our own strength, and think all is well; God lets loose a Temptation upon us, and then we see the need of divine grace to keep us.

4. God suffers his people to be tem-  
B 4 pted,

Heb. 2. 18.

pted, that they may be the better fitted to comfort others in their Temptations. It is said of our Saviour, *That he being tempted, is able to succour them that are tempted.* None so fit to comfort *tempted souls*, as he that hath been exercised with Temptations himself.

Mark 1. 13.

5. God exerciseth his people with Temptations to prepare them for his *Divine consolations*. When our Saviour underwent that great Temptation in the wilderness, the *Angels came and ministered unto him.* It is the usual method of God, first to humble, then to comfort. Now Temptations are a means to humble the Saints, and so to prepare them for Divine Consolations. Experienced souls know this to be true, that the saints greatest comforts come in after their greatest conflicts. I have scarce known any, that have attained to great experience in Divine consolations, but those that have been greatly exercised and tried with Temptations.

6. God suffers his people to be tempted that he may add to their *Crown*, Jam. 1. 12. *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the Crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love*

fitted love him. We read of some in the seventh of Revelations, That they were clothed with white robes, and they had palms in their hands: and who were these? these were such as came out of great tribulation, Rev. 7. 14. The saints who came out of great tribulation and temptation, these are they that have palms of victory put into their hands. God will put a special mark and badge of honour upon such as have undergone greatest services, and born the greatest conflicts. It was a good expression of one: When thou art tempted and dost overcome the temptation, thou shalt have a double reward; whereas if thou art not tempted, thou shalt have a single reward.

*Tentatus habet  
bis premium  
duplex, ubi non  
tentatus, praemium  
simplex.*

Is it so, that the saints are exercised with great and sore temptations? Is it the lot of the holiest men, of the eminent servants of God to be exercised with grievous and sore temptations?

*Use.*

This should teach us not to be weary of the *spiritual conflict*; the *life* of a Christian here on earth is a *life of Temptation*. Temptations we must expect, and therefore we ought to prepare for them, 1 Tim. 6. 12. *Fight the good fight of faith*. A Christians life is a *fighting*

*ing life.* A Christian is incompassed round with many enemies, and he must expect to fight his way through, to Heaven. I often think of the speech of an Ancient, Wise and Experienced Christian, a man that had walkt with God many years:

O saith he, it is *hard fighting till we get to Heaven.* We think of an *ease Christianity*, we think to get *smoothly* to Heaven, we think to meet with no *rubbs*, difficulties, and temptations in our way, Oh but it will not be so! *Through much tribulation we must enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* He that will be a *Christian*, saith another, must expect to be conversant in the midst of death, in the gripes and terrors of Conscience, in the midst of the teeth of the Devil and of Hell.

Nos sic sumus,  
ut optemus ver-  
bum vite &  
lætitiæ habere:  
sed tentationes  
mortis & tristi-  
tiæ abesse: bel-  
li profectò &

suaves Tecologi! Discendum igitur est quòd in media morte, in morsu & pa-  
voribus conscientie, in medio dentium Diaboli & Inferni versandum sit  
Christiano. Luthur.

There are temptations of divers sorts and kinds, *External, Internal.* Temptations from the *world*, from *Satan*, from our *own hearts*: when one Temptation is over we must expect another. There is no rest or quiet for a Christi-  
an



an to be expected on this side Heaven. It is true, God out of his infinite wisdom and goodness gives some few intervals of rest and peace to his people, that they may not be quite worried by their temptations. But when they have rested a while, they must expect new conflicts, new assaults. Thus we read of our Saviour when the Devil had ended his Temptations, he departed from him for a season, Luke 4. 13. The Devil had not so ended his temptations, but he had a mind to begin again, and though he had left him for a season, it was but for a season, and it was to try him with fresh assaults. We must look for new assaults of the enemy. *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my father in his throne,* Revel. 3. 21. We must first overcome before we can expect the Crown. Now there must be a fighting before there can be an overcoming. No man can expect the reward till he have gotten the victory, and no victory can be gotten without fighting.

Our Life in this our Pilgrimage cannot be without temptations, because our proficiency in grace is known by temptati-

ptations. No man knows himself but by temptations. It is a speech of *Austin*, *No man can be crowned unless he overcome, and no man can overcome unless he war and fight, neither can he war and fight unless he have enemies and temptations.* Wherefore we should not be weary of *fighting*, weary of striving, since this is the condition of our present state. Our present state is a *warring conflicting* state. And by how much the more fiercely we are tempted and assaulted, by so much the more gloriously shall we be Crowned at last, if so be we overcome.

*The end of the First Sermon.*

SERMON

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## S E R M O N II.

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2 Cor. 12. 7, 8, 9.

*And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.*

*For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.*

*And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*

**W**E come now to give some Directions how we may keep up the spiritual conflict.

I. If we would keep up this spiritual conflict, take heed of *security*, let us never think our selves out of danger; when we are out of the danger of one temptation, we may be in danger of another, so that there is never any time  
or

or place for security. 1 Pet 5. 8. *Be sober, be vigilant: because your adversary the Devil, as a roaring Lyon walketh about seeking whom he may devour.*

If we watch not, the Devil may surprize us before we are aware, you know it is our Saviours counsel, watch and pray that you enter not into temptation: without continual watchfulness we shall be soon overtaken with some temptation or other.

2. If we would keep up this spiritual conflict, Let us study and consider which way our temptation lies, whether to pride, or to passion, or to love of the world, or to unbelief, or to some other thing: It is one great piece of a Christians skill, to know which way his corruptions and temptations lie most.

For unless we know wherein our weakness, and our enemies strength lies most, how can we watch, or arm and fortifie our selves against them? Some have their temptations lying more outwardly, some more inwardly; some are more affected with outward things, with sensible things, with riches, pleasures, sensual delights, and the like. Some have their temptations more inward, and are affected with envy, pride, unbe-

unbelief, diffidence, distrust of the providence of God. These are their temptations. Now it concerns us wisely to consider where the strength of our temptations lies, for usually every man hath some *peculiar Temptation*; something or other that is more than other a temptation to him.

3. If we would keep up the *spiritual conflict*, let us be sure to oppose our watch and the utmost of our diligence there where the strength of our temptations lies. As he said in that case, *Fight not against great or small, but against the King of Israel*: So we should set the main strength of the battle against our peculiar temptations, we should fight against constitution sins and corruptions. *I was upright*, saith **Psalm 18. 23.** *David, and kept my self from my iniquity.* He set himself against every sin, but especially he set himself to keep himself from *his own iniquity*.

4. If we would keep up the *spiritual conflict*, let us be sure not to go forth to fight and conflict with temptations in our own strength. By strength shall no man prevail, *1 Sam. 2. 9.* That is, no man ever did or shall prevail by his own strength. We think to do great things

things by the strength of our resolution, and truly resolution is good if it be subordinate to our dependance on Christ. But if when we have had experience that such a temptation hath been strong upon us, and we think we will fortifie our resolutions against it, and we shall bear it down another time by our own strength; truly when temptation comes we shall feel our own weakness and fall very shamefully. I remember a notable expression *Austin* hath, *why dost thou stand in thy self, and yet art not able to stand? cast thy self securely on God, fear not that God will fail thee, or suffer thee to fall to the ground, he will receive and heal thee.* The best way in all temptations is to cast our selves on Divine grace: wo to him that thinks to stand by himself.

*Quid in te stat,  
& non stas, &c.*

5. If we would keep up the spiritual conflict, let us *keep the eye of the mind fixt and intent upon God: Mine eyes are ever towards thee,* saith *David* in the twenty seventh Psalm. The best way to overcome our temptations, is to have our minds *elevated* and lifted up to God. Whilst the mind hath a clear apprehension of God, and the affections carried out in strength after

ter God, it is not possible that Temptations should prevail. I remember the reason the *Schoolmen* give of the *confirmation* of grace in the Saints in Heaven, and that they cannot fall; it is the *beatifical vision*, because they always see the face of God. The Saints in Heaven having always the sight of God, *adhere* to him inseparably; they having the sight of God, and knowing that they have the fruition of the chief good, that there is not a better nor higher good to be enjoyed, nothing can be a temptation to them to draw them off from such a good. We should labour for a *clear and more perfect knowledge* of God here on earth; the more we know God *experimentally*, the less power will temptations have over us. If we have *tasted* that the Lord is *gracious*; if we have had but a little glimpse of the Divine *Excellency* and *perfection*, all that the flesh, and the Devil, and the world can offer to us, will seem little to what we see, and find to be in God. Therefore let us labour to have our mind and affections elevated to God: the more we have our minds and affections elevated to God, the less will temptations prevail over us.

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Use 2.

The second Use is this; Is it so, that it is the lot of the *holiest* men, and of the most *eminent servants* of God to be *exercised* with *grievous* and  *sore temptations*? This may *inform* us how much *carnal people* are mistaken, who think their conditions to be therefore good, because they meet with no temptations. This is a great mistake, they know not what *conflicts* and *temptations* mean. All things are quiet and in peace with them. They think they are a company of melancholy timorous people only, that speak of inward troubles, and are vexed and disquieted with temptations. But such temptations are never the less, because they are not sensible of them. The greatest temptation of all other is, to have no sense of temptation. To this end let me propound to you these two Considerations.

1. When men are without *sense* of temptations, it is a sign they are *taken captive by the Devil at his will*. It is the expression of the *Apostle*, 2 *Tim.* 2. 26. When the *strong man armed keeps the house, all things are in peace*. It is a sign men are fast bound in *Satan's chains*, when they are not sensible



ble of his temptations. It is certain, that Satan is always restless in his malice, still laying snares and baits to tempt men to sin, and the world is full of baits and snares; therefore when men think that they are most secure they are most in danger. Satans temptations are always nearest to a man, when he thinks them farthest off.

2. When men have no *sense* of temptations, it is a sign they are destitute of a *principle* of grace that should oppose temptation. It is said of a Godly man, that he doth *not commit sin, because his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God*, 1 John 3. 9. A regenerate person may be tempted to sin as other men; but there is the seed of God and of grace in him, that makes head against temptation. *The spirit lusteth against the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit.* Now when men are sensible of no such conflict as this is, it is a sign they have not the seed of God in them, that they want a *principle* of grace.

It is true, There may be a *conflict* between *conscience* and *sin* in the heart of a carnal man. I speak this that we may not be mistaken in our judgement

concerning the *spiritual conflict*. Every *conflict* is not the *conflict* between sin and grace in a mans heart. There may be a conflict between *Conscience* and sin in the heart of a carnal man. A carnal man hath a mind to such a sin, Conscience warns him of it, will not suffer him to sin unchecked, unreprieved; so that here is a conflict about sin: but all this while there may be no opposition in his will against sin. But now in a regenerate person there is a *will*, and a *will*; a will inclining to sin, and a will opposing that inclination. But now there is no principle of opposition against sin in the will of an unregenerate man: the full bent of his will is carried out towards sin, though there be a fight in his Conscience against it. Therefore when men are sensible of no temptations, neither from Satan, nor from their own hearts; it is a sign there is but *one principle* in them, and that is *flesh* and corruption only. There are saith *Luther*, in a Godly man two *contrary Leaders* or Commanders, the flesh, and the spirit. Therefore when a man is sensible of no temptation, feels no warfare, no conflict with sin, it is a sign there is but one

*Sunt in nobis  
duo contrarii  
Duces, caro &  
spiritus. Lu-  
ther.*

one principle in him, and that is a principle of flesh and corruption. Therefore *carnal men* have no reason to please themselves that they are not so melancholy and dejected as others are, who are under temptations; certainly it is a sign that when all things are in peace with them, the *strong man armed* keeps the house.

A third Use is an Use of Direction to teach us how to carry it when we are under Temptation.

If it be so, That it is the lot of the holiest men, and of the most eminent servants of God to be exercised with grievous and sore Temptations:

Use 3.

Then let us labour for the spiritual skill how to manage temptations, and to carry it aright under temptation.

Here I shall propound four or five Directions, to shew how we ought to carry it under temptations.

*Direction 1.* If we would carry it aright under temptations; Let us study what Gods ends are in permitting such a temptation, especially great and notable temptation to come upon us.

*Affliction comes not out of the dust.* Satan could not annoy or infest us but by Gods permission. Satan is held in

Gods chain, he can go no further than God permits him. Therefore when we find Satan let loose upon us, and our peace is disturbed, let us consider what Gods ends are in permitting such a temptation; why God lets loose that cruel wolf to worry us.

Consider if you have not been too remiss in prayer, let fall your watch, been too confident of your own strength; wisely search out the matter why God suffers such a temptation to come upon you.

*Direct. 2.*    *Direct. 2.* Study also *Satans ends.*

As God hath his *ends* in permitting us to be tempted; so Satan hath his ends in tempting of us. Gods ends in permitting us to be tempted are always good, he doth it to humble us, to quicken us to prayer, to keep us in dependence, to search more into our own hearts, to see what is amiss there. Satans end is usually to disturb our peace, to weaken our hearts and our hands in the ways of God, or to draw us into some plain sin; now we ought not to be ignorant of *Satans devices*. If Satan Tempt thee to unbelief, to question all, to question whether thou art sincere, whether thou art in a *state* of grace, and

and have a right to salvation, make use of the temptation so far as to examine thy evidences a fresh. But do not presently let go thy hold; *My integrity, saith Job, will I hold fast till I die.*

This I speak to such as are *real Christians*; few others I conceive are troubled with that Temptation, to doubt and question their state, but the *children of God*: Now to such I would say, do not presently let go your integrity, when you are tempted to question your sincerity, and then do not *let go* your hold of the *promises*.

This is a true *proposition*, *He that believeth shall be saved.* All the Devils in Hell cannot overthrow that truth: Therefore keep thy hold of the promise still, let not Satan be able to beat thee off from the promise. Whether thou shalt be saved yea or no, this is a proposition of eternal Truth, *He that believeth shall be saved.*

Then if it be some plain sin that Satan tempts thee to, presume not on thy own strength, but presently fly to *Divine Grace* to keep thee from that sin. It is a great part of wisdom in all temptations to consider Satans ends, which are to draw us off from the word, and

## Directions how to carry it

from duty, and to allure us to some sin. Now we should endeavor to frustrate Satan in his ends, and beware of his devices.

*Direct. 3.*

*Direct. 3. Resist temptations at the first approach of them; Resist the Devil and he will flee from you, Jam. 4. 7.* If Satan be resisted, he will not stand his ground; we have the word of God for it, *Resist the Devil and he will flee*, only let us look to this that we be peremptory in our *resistance*. Take heed that we do not *dally* with a temptation, but as soon as ever a temptation appears, presently to resist it; the least dallying with a temptation brings us under great danger of being overcome by it. If Satan can but get so much ground as to draw our thoughts and minds to what he propounds: If there be that which *Divines* call a fixing and staying of the *mind* with some delight on what is presented, there is marvellous great danger of being overcome. Therefore the best way is to keep the enemy at the outworks, and not suffer him to come near to our wills and affections; when temptations offer themselves to our fancies or understandings presently resist them, not parley with them

*Delectatio morosa.*

them in *our minds*. If we parley with the temptation, it may soon give them an inlet to our wills and affections.

*Direct. 4.* The best way of dealing with some temptations is, by *turning away from the temptation with a holy disdain*. As Christ said to *Peter* in that case, *Get thee behind me, Satan*; so when Satan casts in *Blasphemous thoughts, Impure thoughts, Murderous Cruel thoughts*, to do any thing against nature; the best way to deal with such temptations is by a simple aversion from the temptation. It is a passage I have met with of one that was experienced and acquainted with temptation. The best way to deal with some temptations is to pronounce one syllable and say, *Fy Satan*. Some poor souls when they find such and such *horrid* thoughts cast into their minds by Satan, are even brought to the brink of despair, think it is impossible that such thoughts can be forgiven. But let such know if such thoughts be resisted and have not the approbation of the will, if the will be carried in defiance to them, they are Satans sins not thine, they shall be laid at Satans door not to thine.

*Direct.*

irect. 5.

*Direct. 5.* In every temptation let us be sure to keep the word of God nigh unto us, and have a present recourse to it. The *word of God* is called the *sword of the spirit*, Ephes. 6. 17. No *sword* so fit to kill and slay a Temptation as the *word of God*. If it be some sin in *practice*, that you are tempted to, take the word, and say as our Saviour did, It is written, it is written to the contrary. If it be some *spiritual inward* sin that we are tempted to, as to Pride, Unbelief, or the like, take the word and oppose it to these sins. If I am a child of God, and Satan tempt me to doubt whether I am in the favour of God or no, take the word and say, *who shall separate us from the love of Christ?* If Satan say thou art a *sinner* and therefore thou shalt be *condemned*, oppose the word and say, *He that believes is not condemned*, John 3. 17. If Satan tempt us to doubt of the immortality of the soul, to doubt of the resurrection of the body, to doubt of the future glory of the Saints: If he tempt us to doubt of any *Article of Faith* whatsoever, we must still have recourse to some word of God that doth clearly and plainly assert the things that

Sa-



Satan tempts us to doubt of ; this is the ready way to slay such temptations : This is a sure rule : There is no way to deal with Satan and his temptations like to this , As to *oppose some true proposition out of the word to what he suggests*. The Devil tempts me to doubt of many things, I must then have recourse to some plain word of God which asserts the contrary , and here must my faith fix it self.

If it be so, That it is the lot of the holiest men, and of the most eminent servants of God to be exercised with grievous and sore temptations :

The last Use is by way of Consolation. This Doctrine doth naturally speak comfort to tempted souls. Art thou tempted? do not despond because of thy temptations: do not think strange concerning thy tryals, conflicts and temptations, as if some *strange things* had hapned to thee, 1 Cor. 10. *There hath no temptation taken you but what is common to man*. It is the lot of the holiest men, of the most eminent servants of God to be tempted ; and usually it is so, That the more any person is beloved of God , the more dear he is to God, the more God suffers him

use 4.

to

*Distingueñdum  
est tentationem  
in initium &  
finem. Luther.*

1 Pet. 2. 9.

*Sancti cum  
maximè peri-  
culis expositi  
sunt, cura mi-  
nimè sentiant  
tentationum.  
Luther.*

to be tried and tempted. Thy temptations are bitter for the present, but they shall have an end. It is an expression of *Luther*, We must *distinguish a temptation into the beginning*, and the end; every temptation hath its end as well as its beginning. Hence is that of the *Apostle Peter*, *The Lord knows how to deliver the Godly out of Temptations.*

It is true that the strength of a temptation usually lies in the length of it. A fierce and sharp temptation, if but short, is not so bitter as a smaller temptation if long continued. But yet let us remember, *That God is faithful who will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able, but will make a way for us to escape.* Certainly, It is the *greatest temptation to be without temptation*; for when we are without temptation, we are apt to be secure, and to neglect faith, and prayer, and so all of a sudden are drawn into some sin before we are aware. I remember it is the observation of *Luther*. The Saints are then especially exposed to the greatest dangers when they are least sensible of temptations. Therefore let us not be discouraged by reason of our temptations, but arm our selves to the spi-

## Comfort for Tempted Souls.

43

spiritual conflict, *fight the good fight of faith.* If we go on *fighting* in the *strength of Christ*, we shall overcome, and if we overcome we shall receive the Crown: *Be thou faithful to the death, and I will give thee a Crown of life.* Revel. 2. 10.

*The end of the Second Sermon.*

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SERMON

## S E R M O N III.

2 Cor. 12. 7, 8, 9.

*And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.*

*For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.*

*And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*

**I** Come now to the second part of the Text, and that is to speak of the ground, and occasion of this exercise and conflict that Paul was under, and that is the danger he was in of being lifted up, *Lest I should be exalted above measure, there was given unto me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me.*

The

## The Nature of Pride in General.

45

The Observation which doth naturally arise from this Part, it is this,

Doct. 2. That, *men of the highest grace, are in danger of Spiritual Pride, and to be exalted above measure.* Lest I should be *exalted above measure*, saith the *Apostle*. Paul was an *Apostle*, a man of more than *ordinary* grace, and yet he was in danger of *Spiritual Pride*.

In the prosecution of this Doctrine, these things are to be spoken unto.

1. We must shew what *Pride* is, what the *Nature* of it is, in General.

2. What *Spiritual Pride* is.

3. We shall shew you how it comes to pass, that men of the highest grace are in danger of *Spiritual Pride*.

1. We shall shew a little what the nature of *Pride* is in general.

*Pride* may be considered either as it is in the *understanding*, or as it is in the *will*: for pride is seated in both the faculties of the soul. *Pride* it is to be found both in the *understanding* and *will*; now we shall consider *Pride* in both.

1. For *Pride* in the *understanding*; *Pride* in the *understanding*, it is nothing

*Vehemens opinio  
superbia ex-  
cellentie.*

thing else but a *vehement opinion*; or *strong conceit* of a mans own *excellency*. And this *pride* in the *understanding* hath several branches.

*Superbia est su-  
pergratians  
mentis elatio  
de eo quod non  
est.*

1. One branch of *Pride* in the *understanding* is, *when we imagine* or *suppose* a greater *excellency* to be in our *selves* than *indeed* there is. *Pride* is a *surpassing* or *excessive* lifting up of the *mind* concerning something that is not. This is one first branch of *Pride*, when I have an apprehension of some *excellency* in my self that is not indeed in me. This was in the Church of *Laodicea*, she conceited her self to be *rich*, and *increased with goods*, and indeed she was *poor*, and *wretched*, and *miserable*, and *blind*, and *naked*, *Rev. 3. 17.* *Pride* ariseth out of some *supposed* *perfections* in us, which are not really in us. *Pride* causeth a man to think he hath that which indeed he hath not. A *proud* man supposeth some *perfections* to be in him which indeed are not in him. He supposeth there is that *wisdom*, *grace*, *holiness* in him which indeed is not in him.

2. *Pride* in the *understanding*, is *when we pore upon* some *excellency* that is in us, as if so be it were our own  
and

and not received. *what hast thou O man that thou hast not received, saith the Apostle, and if thou hast received it, why dost thou boast as if thou hadst not received it?* This is pride when we glory in the gifts of God, as if so be they were our own and not his. *Maximum superbiae genus ——— It is the highest kind of pride, saith Austin, for a man to lift up himself above others, with the gifts which he hath received from God.*

3. Pride in the understanding is, when we suppose there is some merit and worth in our selves, by which God is obliged to do that for us, and bestow that upon us which he doth do for us, and bestow upon us. Our Saviour tells us, *when we have done all we are unprofitable servants.* It is not possible that the creature should oblige God in a way of merit, by any thing he can do; for when the creature hath done its utmost, it is but a debt of duty that it owes to God. Therefore when we presume upon our own worthiness, to think we have done so and so, and walked so and so, and therefore think God is bound to us, this is *Pride*.

4. The last branch of Pride in the understanding is, *when we admire and overvalue our selves and despise others.*

Thus the proud Pharisee, *I am not as other men are, I am no Extortioner, &c. neither am I as this Publican.* Pride causeth a man to *magnifie* himself, and think *contemptuously* of all others. Although it be some *raal good*, some *real excellency*, some *real perfection* we are possessed of, yet it is possible we may think too well of our selves because of it; the more *good* is in us, the more are we beholding to divine grace, and the better we should think of the grace of God. *By grace I am what I am*, saith *Paul*. But now this is the nature of pride to cause a man to draw down every thing to himself; and instead of admiring the grace of God, which only ought to be admired, pride causeth us to admire our selves.

But 2. There is *pride* in the *will*. Now pride in the will is the *overloving* of, or overdesiring a mans own *excellency*. As pride in the understanding is too great an opinion of a mans own *excellency*, so pride in the will is the overloving of a mans own excellency, or an inordinate desire of a mans

*Amor seu inordinatus appetitus propriae excellentiae.*



own excellency. Now *pride* in the will, hath several things by which it is discovered.

1. The *root* of pride in the *will* is *discontent*. It is generally conceived, and not without grounds, that the first sin of the Angels, and occasion of their fall, it was *Pride*. Now the root of this pride was *discontent*. And that appears from that expression of the Apostle Jude, Jude Ep. verse 5, *The Angels which kept not their first station*. This was the occasion of the *Angels* fall, they were not contented to be in the place, and station God had set them in, they would be in a higher sphere than that God had placed them in. A proud person is not content with the state God hath placed him in. Some of the ancients make *ingratitude* or *unthankfulness* to be one species or kind of pride. When a man is not thankful for the benefits he hath received; but though God hath done much for him, he is still discontent, this is one sign of pride. *Discontent* is a certain argument of pride. A discontented person thinks nothing good enough for him, whereas a humble person thinks every thing that is less than Hell, is a *mercy*.

D 2

2. Pride

2. Pride in the will is when there is *affectation of some superior excellency, to the place and condition God hath set a man in*: This was in the *Angels* that fell, and this was in our *first Parents*. The great temptation to our *first Parents*, was this, *You shall be as Gods*; they aspired after the *Divinity*, there was an affectation of some excellency that was above the rank and condition of creatures. When a private person affects to be in the dignity of a magistrate. When *Korah, Dathan and Abiram* affected the *Priests Office*, this was pride. And in general it may be said when persons aspire to a *superior excellency* than what is suitable to the *condition and place* God hath set them in, this is pride in the will.

3. Pride in the will is, *when a man refuseth to submit to the supremacy of the Divine will*. When a man would have no *superior* to himself. When a man would be his own Lord and make his *own will* a law to himself. What greater pride than this, for a man to own no *superior*? For a man to be willing to have none *above* him, that should govern him? This is the nature of pride.

Jerem. 2. 37.

*Wherefore say my people we are Lords, we will*

*will come nomore unto thee?* A proud person is a man that is wholly given to *please himself*, he disdains to submit to the will of another, he will be wholly governed by his own will. This is an argument of *intolerable* pride, when the creature refuseth to submit it self to the *Divine will*. The perfection of a created will is to submit its self to the Divine and Increated will. Now when the creature casts off the *Authority* of God, and will not submit to the Divine will, this is an argument of the highest pride. This was in them we read of in Jer. 44. 16. *As for the word that thou hast spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken to thee.*

4. Pride in the will is, when there is a *desire of singularity*. When a man desires that the excellency of others may be obscured, that so his excellencies may alone appear. When a man would appropriate something to himself; when a man is of this temper, that he desires such a good so as that he would not have others to share in that good with himself: this is an argument of pride in the will, when there is an affectation of singularity.

5. The last discovery of pride in the *will* is this, *when a man makes himself his last end*. When a man refers all things to himself; when he desires the *gifts and graces* of God and other *good things*, not that God might be *glorified*, but that he only may be seen and admired.

Thus I have shewn the nature of *pride* in general.

We come in the second place to shew the nature of *Spiritual Pride*, because the *Text* leads us to the consideration of that, *Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations*. The pride that *Paul* was tempted to, was not that pride, the generality of people are lifted up with: but his pride was another thing; *Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations*. *Spiritual Pride* was his temptation; Therefore I shall speak something concerning spiritual pride. To open this we must know there is that we call *external pride*, and then there is spiritual pride.

1. There is *external pride*; now that which we call *external pride*, is not so called, as if it had not an *inter-  
nal*

## The Nature of Spiritual Pride.

53.

*ternal root*; for even in *outward pride*, there is an *inward root* in the heart and mind; but we therefore call it *external pride*, because it is such a pride as ariseth from *external things*.

Now external pride is distinguished according to the diversity of the objects from whence pride ariseth. I shall only lightly touch some parts of *external pride*. There is *pride of birth*, or of *blood* and *parentage*, pride of a mans *family*, *pride of strength*, *pride of beauty*, *pride of apparel*, there is pride of *riches*; Pride is the *worm* that doth naturally breed and grow out of *riches*, there is pride of *dignity* and *honor*. Such is the proclivity and propension of mans nature to pride, that it is apt to take occasion of pride from the least things. Such is the *dignity* and *excellency* of the soul, that one would think that so *noble* and *excellent* a thing as the *soul* is, should not take an occasion of pride from such little things as *paint* and *hair*, and some *poor ornaments*, or indeed from any external things that are so far beneath the excellency and dignity of the soul. But pride is a mysterious sin, and pride will draw the least thing to it self as an occasion of pride. It

*Distichium  
v. 1115.*

## The Nature of Spiritual Pride.

is the property of pride to affect an *ostentation of excellency*, and when we have no greater thing to make an ostentation of excellency by, we are apt to catch at every poor thing, every poor shadow, to make an ostentation of excellency by it. One would wonder at what poor things the pride that is in the heart of man catches hold of, to make a shew of excellency by. But this is the mysteriousness of this evil of pride, to take occasion by the least thing to lift the heart up.

But there is another thing I am to speak of, and that is spiritual pride.

Now *spiritual pride* ariseth from the *undue apprehension of some spiritual excellency in us*. As *external* pride ariseth from the consideration of external things: So *spiritual* pride ariseth from the consideration of some *spiritual* and *internal* excellency.

Now this I call an *undue apprehension* of some spiritual excellency that is in us. I call it *undue*, because there may be an *apprehension* so far of the gifts and graces of God in us as to give to God the glory of his own gifts. But when there is such an apprehension of the gifts and graces of God in us, so as to think  
highly

*highly* of our selves because of these things, when we *pore* upon the *gifts* of God, as if so be they were our own; when we forget the *author* of those gifts, when we *admire* our selves and *despise* others, this is *spiritual pride*.

Now spiritual pride, it ariseth from  
several things.

1. There is pride of *natural* parts and *indowments* of the *mind*, pride of wit, of *memory*, of *judgement*, of the goodness of a mans *natural* temper, and *disposition*.

2. There is pride of *spiritual gifts and graces*, pride ariseth out of our good actions. *All other vices are to be feared in our evil actions, pride is that vice that is to be feared in our good actions.*

*Omnia vitia in  
male actis ti-  
me. da f. n. f. p.  
perbia in a. n. f.  
sillis. p. n. f. m.  
t. e. d. d. Aug.*

3. There is pride of *comforts*, and *spiritual revelations*; this was Paul's case here in the Text, *Lest I should be exalted through the abundance of the revelations.* If God hath done any thing more for a man either in point of *grace*, or *spiritual comfort*, than he hath done for another, no man is in such danger of pride as he is; and he hath most reason to watch against that sin.

Here I shall give you some brief  
touches

touches to shew you how this sin doth act it self. The actings of spiritual pride discover themselves in such things as these.

1. Pride makes a man to forget and overlook all his deformities, and to pore only upon his supposed perfections. When pride acts a man, it takes off his eye from the *black side* that is in him, and his eye gazeth only upon that which he thinks to be fair and beautiful. Pride makes a man to forget his own *deformities*, *infirmities* and *corruptions*, it makes him forget his own emptinets, *nothingness*, and *insufficiency in himself*, and to pore only upon those things which indeed are the *gifts of God*, as if so be they were not Gods, but his own.

Timot. i. c. xix.

"Isa. lxv. c. vii-  
dipwua"

2. The acting of spiritual pride discovers its self in *swelling apprehensions* concerning a mans self. I remember it is a frequent expression that *Austin* hath concerning pride, he calls it, *The humor*, or *swelling of pride*; it is the property of pride to make a man to *swell* in great and big thoughts of himself. Mark those words in the Text, lest I should be *exalted* above measure: Pride causeth a man to be *exalted* in his own thoughts.



thoughts. From hence follows a *pre-fering* a mans self before others. Hence is that expression you have in *Deuteronomy*, *Lest his heart should be lifted up above his brethren*. When a mans heart is swollen with pride, he himself seems great, and all others seem little. *Is not this great Babel that I have built for the house of the Kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?* A proud person thinks himself a *non-such* in the world.

3. And then in the third place, That which is the natural consequence upon this, there is despising and contemptuous thoughts of others. Pride makes a man undervalue all but himself.

The first Use shall be by way of Examination. This should put us upon the search and inquiry into our selves, to see what spiritual pride we can discover and find out in our selves. Pride is a *subtil* sin, an *insinuating* sin, it insinuates its self into all we do. Pride is like *Ivy* that grows and twists about the tree; as the tree grows, so the *Ivy* grows. Pride mingles its self with all we do. And it is one good sign of some *growth* in grace when we can discover the *mixtures* of pride in all we do.

The

the best of Gods children are in danger of this sin.

And here I shall shew, when it is that we are most in danger of spiritual pride, that so we may the more narrowly observe our selves, and discover this sin when it doth arise.

1. Then are we in danger of spiritual pride, when there is any *appearance* of good in us, either as to our selves or others. The ground and foundation of pride, is some *excellency*, either *real* or *supposed*. A man is not wont to be proud of some thing that is not excellent, either *really*, or *supposedly* so; but when there is any thing we suppose to have some *excellency* in it, that appears to our selves or others, then we are in danger of Pride. When we apprehend there is an *excellency* of *parts*, *wisdom*, *memory*, *judgement*, and the like, an excellency of disposition, temper, an excellency of gifts and graces: When we apprehend this to be in us, or others apprehend this to be in us, then have we need to watch, then are we in danger of spiritual pride. When a man thinks any thing to be in himself, or others think any thing to be in him whereby he doth excel others, then he is in danger of spiritual pride.

2. Then

2. Then are we in danger of spiritual pride, when there is an *increase* of knowledge in us, and there is not an increase of other graces *proportionable*. The Apostle tells us, 1 Cor. 8. 1. That knowledge puffeth up. Knowledge where it is not sanctified, it will certainly puff men up. Knowledge if it be sanctified is a means to humble men. Now I have seen thee by the seeing of the eye, saith Job, Now I abhor myself, Job 42. 5; 6. The clearer knowledge Job had of God, the more vile was he in his own eyes. Sanctified knowledge humbles. The more we know God, the more we know our distance from God; and the more we know the will of God, the more we see how short we come of the spirituality of the Law, and this is a means to humble us. But now when there is only a growth in *speculative knowledge*, without a growth in other grace, this is apt to lift a man up. When a man thinks he hath more raised notions of God, and Christ, and Spiritual mysteries than other men, this exposeth him to the temptation of spiritual pride.

3. Then are we in danger of spiritual pride, when we have had *greatest assistance*,

*stances*, and *inlargements* from the spirit of God. *Assistances* and *inlargements* should humble us; for the more we *receive* from God, the more are we *beholding* to God, and the more we should *admire* his grace. But such is the corruption of humane nature, that we are apt to glory in the gifts of God, as if so be they were our own. And therefore when we find quickning and enlargement in holy duties, these are apt many times to lift us up. But this is just as if a private person should put on the *Robes* and *Ornaments* of a King, and be proud of them. These *gifts*, these enlargements are but the *Ornaments* God hath put upon us, and yet we are proud of them.

4. Then are we in danger of spiritual pride, when God hath made some *eminent* use of us, and employed us in some *eminent* service. There is as little reason for pride in this case as in the former. For we are more beholding to God for using of us, than he is beholding to us for any service we do for him, for God hath no need of us, and all that we do *for him*, it is *by him*, for no creature is any thing, any farther than God takes it up and acts it. The best  
of

of the creatures are nothing, any farther than God takes them up, useth them, and acts them: and it is the highest honour that God will employ any creature in his service, who could if he pleased do all by himself without any creature. Yet such is our corruption, that when God hath used us, we are apt to have high thoughts of our selves, and mean thoughts of others, of whom God hath not made that use: whereas this should humble us, that God should use us and not others, whereas he might have laid us aside and have taken up others, and have used them.

5. Then are we in danger of *spiritual pride*, when we are in *honour* and *estimation* with others. I remember it is an *ancient proverb*, and it is a true one, *He had need of strong bones that can bear many good days*: truly we may say, He had need of strength of grace indeed, that can bear much applause and estimation, and not be lifted up. We should glory in the *honour* that *comes from God only*. It is true, we ought to bless God for any *acceptation* he gives us among his people, that so we may be more serviceable, and God have more glory. But *Honour* and *Estimation*, so far as it concerns

cerns ours selves only, is not a thing so much to be rejoyced in; and the reason is, because this is the temper we should be of. A Christian should desire that he might be *unseen*, and that he and all creatures might be reduced to nothing, that God alone might be seen and glorified: but such is the corruption of our nature, that it is marvellous difficult for us to bear estimation and honour, and not to feel the risings of spiritual pride.

6. Then are we in danger of spiritual pride, when God himself casts some special honour on us, when God doth not only give us honour and estimation among his people, but when God himself sets some *badge* and *mark* of honour upon us. When he gives us some *eminent deliverance*, some *eminent answer* to prayer, some *signal* mercy or other, we are apt then to be lifted up, because God sets some mark of honour on us, Psa. 91. 15. *I will deliver him and honour him*, we may understand it thus, I will honour him in delivering of him. I will deliver him so that his deliverance shall be honourable and glorious. Thus God did by his people at the red sea, he gave them a glorious deliverance;

verance: he did not only deliver them, but honoured them in delivering of them; or else I will deliver him and honour him; we may understand it so, I will first *deliver* him, and then I will *honour* him after I have delivered him. Thus God did by *Joseph*, he first delivered him out of prison and then honoured him, he made him Ruler over *Egypt*. Now when it is thus with a man that God delivers him and honours him, by setting some special badge of favour upon him, such a man is in danger of spiritual pride. A sad instance we have in *Hezekiah*, God delivered him and honoured him, he gave him a great deliverance, he delivered him from the plague, and gave him riches and honour in abundance; this became a temptation of pride to him; then was *Hezekiah's* heart lifted up, when God had thus delivered him and honoured him.

Thus I have shewn in what cases we are in danger of *spiritual pride*: more possibly may be thought of, but I shall mention no more. O let us narrowly mark the workings of this corruption in our selves, this sin is exceeding natural and incident to our nature; and

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if

if we do not see pride in our selves, it is not because it is not in us, but because we want a spiritual eye to see that in our selves that indeed is in us. O let us narrowly look to the workings of this corruption, a little pride doth greatly stain and blemish our *best graces*, our *best duties*, our *best services*: a little poyson, a dram of poyson, is poyson; and no sin hath more venom, malignity and poyson in it than pride hath. I shall shew hereafter something of the venom and malignity that is in this sin.

Let us therefore labour to find out the workings and actings of this sin in us. He is a rare Christian that carries so curious an eye upon himself, as diligently to observe the first buddings and puttings forth of pride in himself.

*Use 2.*

Labour to be humbled for the workings of pride. It becomes us to be humbled for every sin, but above all for the workings of Pride. It is said of *Hezekiah*, that he humbled himself for the pride of his heart. No sin so unbecoming a creature, so contrary to the nature of a creature, and contrary to the glory of God as pride, as I may shew more at large hereafter. Therefore



fore we should humble our selves greatly for this sin, and the more we are tempted to this sin, the more we should pray that we might abound in humility. Such is the power of Omnipotent grace, that it can turn our diseases into a remedy and a medicine to heal us. God can by the power of Omnipotent grace make pride a means to heal pride in us. Now we should pray to find the power of *Omnipotent grace* put forth in our hearts, so as to make our pride a means to humble us. Divine grace can shew us the ugliness and deformity that is in our hearts by the pride that is in them; and we should pray that this may be a great means to humble us, that we have such a monstrous sin as pride within us; for if ever God open our eyes, we shall see that pride is the greatest monster in all the world.

*The end of the Third Sermon.*

## S E R M O N I V.

2 Cor. 12. 7, 8, 9.

*And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.*

*For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.*

*And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*

**I** Come now to give the grounds and reasons of the Doctrine, to shew how it comes to pass that men of the highest grace, are yet in danger of spiritual pride.

*Reason 1.*

The first Reason of it is, Because Satan assaults and tempts such most. None are like to be more fiercely assaulted than men of the highest grace. It is a great Scripture to illustrate this,  
 Luke

Luke 22. 31. *Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.* Peter was one of the most eminent of all the Apostles. Now our Saviours intention was to admonish *Peter* of the danger he was in above the rest. It was not *Peter* only that was in danger: the rest of the Apostles were in danger of temptation as well as *Peter*; for our Saviours words are in the plural number, *Satan hath desired to have you*, he doth not say to have *thee*, but to have *you*, that is, he hath a desire to assault you all and tempt you all; but Christ mentions *Peter*; he doth not mention any of the rest, to shew that *Satan* had a peculiar mind to tempt and assault him above the rest; and our Saviour admonisheth *Peter* of the danger he was in above the rest, *Simon, Simon*; the repetition our Saviour useth, notes the earnestness of the affection with which he speaks. When we admonish a friend of a danger, we say, Friend, Friend, have a care of such a thing. Our Saviour admonisheth *Peter* of the danger he was in: though all the rest of the Apostles were in danger, yet Christ knew *Satan* had a particular malice against *Peter*, and would assault him

above the rest. The more eminent a man is in grace, the greater advantage the Devil thinks to make, in case he can foil such a person. And although Satan may not think to prevail always against a man that hath much grace, yet he knows not but he may prevail. Satan knows that many strong ones have been overcome by his temptations. Our first parents in innocency, *Sampson*, *David*, and others that were great saints, and he knows not but he may prevail upon others. Now if he can prevail over some *eminent Saint*, he knows that his conquest and triumph will be so much the greater. The Devil knows nothing will be a greater wound and blow to Religion, than if he can make some eminent Saint to fall. Now Satan knows that he can undo a man by nothing sooner, than by the temptation of spiritual pride: for, as for gross sins in practice, a holy man abhors them, and at the very first blush of a temptation, when a gross sin is presented to him, he turns away with disdain. Oh, but spiritual pride is a more subtil sin, and the Devil may more easily insinuate the temptation of that sin, and so prevail.

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The second Reason is, Pride is such *Reason 2.*  
a sin as doth *naturally arise* and *spring*  
out of our *own hearts*. Pride was the  
*first sin* that infected the nature of the  
creature. It was the first sin that did  
*undo* our first Parents: the first sin that  
infected the *Angels* that fell. The An-  
gels that fell had no tempter, none to  
tempt them to pride, and yet they fell  
into pride. This is a clear argument,  
that there is no sin we are more inci-  
dent unto than pride. Man is indow-  
ed with an *apprehensive* faculty, and  
when he apprehends some excellency  
in himself that is not in another, then  
he is in danger of pride in the under-  
standing; and when he apprehends some  
superior excellency that is attainable,  
that he hath not attained unto, then  
he is in danger of pride in the will,  
for that is pride in the will, the affe-  
ctation of a superior excellency: so that  
there is no sin we are more naturally  
subject to than pride, it naturally  
springs and grows up out of our na-  
ture.

The third Reason why men of the  
highest grace are subject to pride is, Be- *Reason 3.*  
cause pride takes occasion from the  
gifts and graces of God, and causeth

a mans heart to rise, swell, and be lifted up. The more gifts and graces God hath bestowed upon any person, he is in so much the more danger of pride. Such is the venom and poyson of pride, that it turns good into evil; sucks poyson out of the gifts and graces of God. Pride makes a man to think, dost thou not see how thou excellest others? Others have not such gifts and parts as thou hast; these are the workings of pride.

*Reason 4.* Fourthly, *where men are indowed with some peculiar excellency in any kind, others are apt to have too great esteem of them.* Now the estimation of others is a great occasion and temptation to pride; for we are apt to value our selves according to the opinion and esteem others have of us, and this often occasions in us temptations unto pride.

*Reason 5.* Fifthly, Men of the highest grace are subject to pride, Because *pride is such a sin as is not so soon conquered and mortified, as other sins are.* A man when he is first converted, is sooner mortified as to *sensuality* and grosser sins; but spiritual pride is not so soon mortified in him. A child of God when

Best men are in danger of Pride.

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when he hath gotten the victory and conquest over other corruptions, yet he is fain to conflict with pride all his days. It is the observation of *Austin*, That God doth not presently hear a man for the *killing* and *mortifying* of his pride; when yet he desires to have pride mortified with great earnestness, and cry to God with great sighs and groans that he may be cured of it. And there are several reasons why God doth not presently hear a man as to this thing, for the mortifying of pride, though he cry to him with sighs and tears that they may be healed of it.

The first Reason is, That he may shew to us the great *corruption* of our nature, how deeply pride is rooted in us. There is nothing shews us the corruption of our nature more than pride doth; for when we have prayed against it, and striven against it, and fortified our selves with all arguments that possibly we can against it, yet there are constant Ebullitions of it; so that nothing shews the corruption of humane nature more than this sin.

2. God doth leave this sin in his people, that he may make pride it self a means to *humble* us. For what more hum-

*Superbiam non  
cure facit Deus  
per quam facit  
illi pie ari-  
me cum lacri-  
mis & gemitibus  
supplicat. Aug.*

humbling consideration than this, that so malignant a root should remain in us, after so many means have been to exterminate it?

3. Lastly, which I take to be a great consideration, God leaves pride in his children notwithstanding all their cries and tears against it, Because it makes them feel the *smart*, and taste the *bitterness* of the *first sin* as long as they live. The *first sin* of the creature, it was pride; and therefore though God out of the riches of his free grace have pardoned it, yet he leaves the root of it that we may carry our *grave cloaths*, the badge of our shame along with us as long as we live. Pride was the occasion of the creatures *apostasy* from God, therefore God will have us carry this badge of our shame with us to our graves. For these reasons God in his infinite wisdom permits pride to continue and remain in us; though he have taken away the power and reign of it in his people: yet he leaves the root of it still, so as that it is matter of great humiliation to them as long as they live. Thus I have given the grounds and reasons of the Doctrine. I come now to the Use and Application of it.

And



It is our Duty to watch against Pride.

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And the great Use I shall make of it is this.

Is it so, That men of the highest grace are in danger of spiritual pride, and to be exalted above measure?

This should teach us to watch and strive most against this sin, the sin of *pride*. I remember it was the speech of an holy man, a wise Christian, and of great experience in the ways of God, As he said, *fight not against small or great, but against the King of Israel*: to say I, of all corruptions fight against these two, *pride* and *self*. We shall have more to do with pride and self-love than with all other sins; when you have mortified other sins, yet pride and self-love will be the two last sins you have to conflict withal.

Use.

In the prosecution of this Use, I shall,

1. Endeavour to shew the *evil* of this sin, and then 2. Propound some *remedies* against it.

1. I shall begin to discourse a little concerning the evil of pride, that we may be more out of love with it, and have our hearts more set against it.

1. Consider that pride is such a sin, as is most *unbecoming* of a creature.

What

What is a *creature* but something that is from another? A creature hath nothing but what it hath received; it is nothing but what it has from another, a creature came out of nothing; it is of it self and by it self nothing, and in it self it tends to nothing. This is the very notion of a creature, if we understand what the nature of it is, that it is all that it is from another. Now a creature by pride *magnifies* it self, and makes it self to be something; yea makes it self to be all. Take the creature abstract from its dependance upon God, and it is nothing. The *being* of the creature is a dependant thing, and the operations of the creature are dependant things. So that take a creature and abstract it from God, and it is nothing. Now a creature that is indeed nothing of it self magnifies it self, and makes it self *all* by pride. The creature by pride lifts up it self, and arrogates that to it self which is not its own, but hath it all from another. What an absurd thing is it, that poor dust should lift up it self, and give out it self, as if it were some great excellent thing? That man that is made of the dust of the earth, should yet lift up him-

To sum off: crea-  
ture est off: de-  
pendens. Aquina.

himself against his Maker.

2. Consider that no sin is so *contrary to the glory of God as pride.*

1. It is the glory of God that he is the most *excellent being*, he is therefore called the *holy one* of *Israel*. The *holy one*, that is the most *excellent one*, the most *incomparable one*; there is none like him, there is none to be compared with him, he is infinitely distinguished from the creatures, He is the peerless matchless one. Now a proud person lifts up himself, and makes himself to be most *excellent*. A proud person would seem to be the most excellent one. Grace teaches us that it is fit that God only should be *seen* and *admired*, and that the creature should be unseen and reduced to nothing, Psal. 57. 5. *Be thou exalted O God above the heavens, let thy glory be above all the earth.* Now pride causeth a man to desire that he only may be *seen* and *admired*. So that pride is such a sin as is most *injurious* to the *Divine Majesty*. A proud person affects an *equality* to God: we do not think of it, but it is certainly so, a proud man would seem to be that which God is.

2. It is the *glory* of God to be the *first cause*;

*cause: All things are of him, and by him: In him we live and move and have our being. It is the glory of God to communicate to the creature whatever the creature hath. Now a proud person robs God of this glory, a proud person attributes all to himself, as if he were the cause of all; why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?*

Daniel 4 30. 1 Cor. 4. 7. *Is not this great Babylon that I have built?*

3. It is the glory of God to be the *last end*, to refer all things to *himself*; hence is it said that he is *Alpha* and *Omega*, the *beginning* and the *end*, the *first* and the *last*. The *original* of all creatures, the *last end* of all creatures. All things are of him, and by him, and to him. Now a proud man makes himself his *last end*, he refers all things to *himself*. It is the property of pride, for a man to affect a *greatness* to himself. A proud person so he be *great*, he cares not who is *little*. Grace teaches us to pray that God may be *great*, *Hallowed be thy name*, what is the meaning of that petition? In that petition we pray that the name of God may be sacred amongst men, that his name may be great and admired amongst

amongst men. Grace teaches us to pray that God may be great amongst men, and pride makes a man desire that he himself may be great: So that pride is *injurious* to God as he is the most *excellent Majesty*, the *first cause*, and the *last end*.

3. To shew the evil of pride, consider that as pride is a sin most contrary to God, so God is most contrary to it. Hence is that expression that God <sup>Asi Tāori-  
Tā.</sup> *resists the proud*, sets himself in *battle array* against them, 1 Pet. 5. 5. God is a professed enemy to proud persons, you can find very few instances of persons that have been eminent for pride, but God hath made them examples of his Judgements. *Pharaoh, Senacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, Herod*, are all monuments of Gods severity against Pride. God is a professed enemy to proud persons, Isa. 2. 11, 12. *The day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up*, so vers. 17. *And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted*. A proud person would *dethrone* God, and set himself in the place of God,

God, and therefore it is no wonder if God ruinè him.

*Idem omnis  
peccati origo,  
æc. Aug.*

4. Consider that *pride* was the *first* sin and the *original* of all sin. The *original* of mans sin, and the Angels first sin was, that they would not be *subject to God*. *Austin* observes the beginning of all sin is pride, and the beginning of pride was to *apostatize* from God, for the creature to refuse to be subject to God.

5. Pride is such a sin as makes men *most like to the Devil*. Pride turned the *Angels* into *Devils*. 1 Tim. 3. 6. *Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the Devil*. That clearly intimates that pride was the Devils first sin. When we would set forth a proud person, we are wont to say, such a person is as proud as *Lucifer*, as proud as the *Devil*. Oh how black a sin is pride that carries the *image* of the *Devil* in it?

6. The sixth Consideration, and that which ought to be matter of trembling, is, *Pride is such a sin as that it oft-times causeth God to suffer men to fall into other sins to heal and cure it*. Oh how great is the venom and poison of pride, that can be cured by no-  
thing

thing else but by poyson? A wise *Physician* permits his patient to fall into a lesser infirmity, to prevent a mortal disease. The infinitely wise God when he seeth his children *inclined* to pride, permits them to fall into other sins, that so the *shame* of those sins may be a means to *humble* them, and *suppress* their pride. It is a speech of *Austin*, I am bold to say, That it is sometimes profitable, and advantageous to proud persons to fall into some open and manifest sin, that so they may be displeasing to themselves, who had already fallen by too much pleasing of themselves. I confess this speech may seem a little harsh, unless it be qualified; we must remember that no sin is *Eligible*. For as we may not *do evil that good may come of it*, so neither may we *desire* evil that good may come of it. But this we may safely say, when God permits it to be so, that a man is in great danger to be lifted up with spiritual pride, and he is overtaken with some other sin; we may then conclude that Gods intention in such a *permission*, it was to cure a greater evil, and so in the *event* it turns to good. Let us not mistake here, that sin proves medicinal to any, to heal

F                      them,

*Audeo dicere si  
perbis esset: utile  
cadere in ali-  
quod apertum  
& manifestum  
peccatum, unde  
sibi displiceant;  
qui jam sibi  
place-do cecide-  
rant. August.*

them, this is not from the nature of sin; the nature of sin is quite contrary: the nature of sin is to harden and to damn. Therefore when at any time sin doth prove *medicinal*, this is from the power of *Divine grace*, that knows how to turn that which is a disease in it self into a *remedy*; yet this is a *trembling consideration*, that so great is the evil of pride, that God suffers his children to fall into other diseases to cure this disease, which is most pernicious of all other.

7. To shew the evil of pride, consider that pride is such a sin that *hinders* and *puts a stop* to the communication of Divine grace. *God gives grace to the humble*, 1 Pet. 5. Look as it is said, that *humility* is the *vessel* that receives and contains other graces: So pride is that which excludes other graces. When a man hath a *self-fulness*, he is not prepared to take in Divine grace. *God fills the hungry with good things, but the rich he sends empty away*: we must be empty of self, before we can be capable of receiving Divine grace. Some of the *Schoolmen* conceive that the cause of the *Angels* sin was, that they thought to attain the *last happiness*,



ness, which was the *vision* of God, by *Per virtutem*  
*virtue of their own nature without the* *natura sue*  
*grace and help of any superior to them-* *ab/q; gratia*  
*selves.* This conceit of their own suf- *alicujus superi-*  
*oris.* ficiency was the occasion of their fall.

When a man supposeth he hath some  
 vertue, or root in himself to resist tem-  
 ptation, and carry him forth to any holy  
 action, this is such a thing as is *exclusive*  
 of Divine grace. He that supposeth that  
 he hath a *self-sufficiency*, cannot see the  
 need he hath of Divine grace. There-  
 fore pride puts a stop to the communi-  
 cation of Divine grace.

8. Pride is a sin that is most contra-  
 ry to our communion with God, Isa. 57.  
 15. *Thus saith the high and lofty one,*  
*whose name is holy, who dwells in the*  
*high and holy place, with him also that*  
*is of an humble and contrite spirit.*  
 God dwells with humble and contrite  
 souls, unto such he delights to manifest  
 himself. A man must be reduced to no-  
 thing in himself, before he be fit to  
 receive divine manifestations. It is the  
 usual method of God to bring his peo-  
 ple to great abasement in themselves,  
 before he manifests himself to them. It  
 is a great Scripture, Psal. 138. 6.  
*Though the Lord be high, yet he hath*

*respect to the lowly, but he beholds the proud afar off.* God keeps himself at a distance from proud persons, but if he observe any in the world. it is the *humble, lowly* soul, that is the soul he delights in. *Though the Lord be high, yet he hath respect to the lowly.* Nothing *indangers* a mans spiritual comforts more than pride: when a man hath had the comforts of the spirit of God, and God hath been affable and familiar with him, and he begins to be lifted up in himself, this causeth God to suspend his comforts. When a man is proud of those things that are *meerly* the gift of God; this causeth God to take away his gifts from him; and so shews him what a poor and empty creature he is in himself, when the gifts of God are withdrawn.

9. Consider, pride makes a man to *forget himself*, pride transports and carries a man beyond himself, pride makes a man forget his own *frailty*, pride makes a man forget that he is a *mutable* creature. *Every man at his best state is altogether vanity.* Take a man in his *best state*, and he is subject to *changes* and *death*. Should a piece of clay be proud? You must shortly

shortly be turned into a clod of earth', and be crumbled into dust. Pride makes us forget that we are mortal. Whatever external excellencies men are proud of, they are fading and withering, *All flesh is grass, and the glory of it as the flower of the grass.* And if a man have some spiritual excellency, and be proud of some gifts and graces of the spirit of God; let God but withdraw his spirit, and he shall soon see that he is nothing.

10. Pride causeth a man to break off his dependance upon God, and deny subjection to him. The perfection of the creature lies in *dependance* upon God, and *subjection* to him. The perfection of a thing is to remain in the condition, in which it was naturally set. Now the creature is placed from the very frame and constitution of its being, in a condition of *dependance* upon God, and *subjection* to him. Now pride causeth a man to cast off his dependance upon God, and subjection to him. A proud person thinks he hath all of himself, and from himself, and therefore seeth no need of dependance. A proud person makes himself his last

*Why we ought to watch against Pride.*

end, and so refuseth to be subject to another.

11. Pride maketh a man *to stick at no sin*; pride is the *mother and root* of other sins. A proud person that makes himself his own end, will stick at nothing to serve himself and accomplish his own ends. These and many more are the evils of pride.

Now it concerns us greatly to watch against this sin, and that for these two Reasons.

1. Because pride is apt to arise *secretly and insensibly* in us. The *root of pride* is ever budding and putting forth it self. There are many risings and ebullitions of pride that arise and spring out of our hearts before we are aware. Pride bubbles up in our duties, services and actions before we think, or are aware of it, it is a thing that grows up secretly.

Then 2. If we do not watch against it, we may soon *grieve the spirit of God*, and cause it to *retire*. There is no sin causeth the spirit of God to withdraw and retire from a child of God more than spiritual pride. Now pride being so incident

dent to our nature, and so apt to rise upon all occasions; we may too soon lose the presence and familiarity of the spirit of God, unless we narrowly watch against this sin.

*The end of the Fourth Sermon.*

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## SERMON V.

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2 Cor. 12. 7, 8, 9.

*And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.*

*For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.*

*And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*

**I** Come now to propound some remedies against this sin. The disease of pride is such a disease as is hardly cured; nay it is not wholly cured in the best of the Saints, while they live in the body, and all the remedies we can think of are little enough to heal this disease.

1. Remedy, Let us study much our own infirmities and imperfections. It is

is a sure rule, *The foundation of humility, is the knowledge of our own defects.* Nothing laies so great a foundation of humility in us, as the knowledge of our own defects. We keep our eyes and pore upon our own supposed perfections, but we forget our infirmities and imperfections. The true sense of our infirmities would strike a holy shame into us. As the apprehension of what is good and excellent in us, is apt to lift us up in pride: So in order to the suppressing and keeping down our pride, it is good to consider our *natural infirmities*, and our *sinful infirmities*.

1. Let us consider our natural infirmities, we are but mutable dying creatures at best, we are but poor pieces of clay. What little reason hath he to be proud, that remembers he is mortal, and must shortly be turned into rottenness and dust? We may say to every one that finds his heart lifted up in pride, as one did that was appointed to come to *Alexander*, and use these words, *Remember that thou art a man*; so may we say, *Remember that thou art a mortal creature*. As high as thou art, and as much lifted up as thou art in thy own apprehension, thou must  
 shortly

*Fundamentum  
humilitatis cog-  
nitio proprii de-  
fectus.*

shortly be turned into rottenness, worms must feed upon thee.

2. Let us consider our sinful infirmities.

1. Consider our great defects in grace, consider our great defects in knowledge, 1 Cor. 8. 2. *If any man think he knows any thing, he knows nothing as he ought to know.* How little is it that the best of us do know concerning the nature of God? Concerning the Divine nature and attributes? How little do we know concerning the Myserie of the *Trinity*? How little do we know concerning the union of the *two natures* in Christ, the *Hypostatical union* as it is commonly called? How little do we know of the *mystical union*, the union of believers with Christ? how little are we acquainted with any of these Articles of Faith? In all these respects we may say with him, *I am more brutish than any man, I have not the understanding of a man*, Prov. 30. 2. And as we are defective in knowledge, so we are defective in *faith*, in *love*, in *self-denial*, in *heavenly mindedness*, and many other graces. If *some* graces may seem to flourish in us, yet are we not greatly defective in other graces? And



And if there be some good in us, is there not a great deal of evil mixed with that little good? Are there not many sinful circumstances that do attend the best of our actions? It was the speech of an eminently holy man. *There was not the best action that ever I did in my life, but God shewed me some sinful circumstance attending it.* Consider what the wise man saith, Eccles. 10. 1. *Dead Flies cause the ointment of the Apothecary to send forth a stinking savour.* A little sin is like a little poison mixed with the greatest delicacies, it mars and spoils all. It is true, God out of his grace forgets the sinful circumstances that attend his peoples services; but sin is of that nature that the least mixture of it is enough to stain and blemish the best action.

2. Consider as there are great defects of grace in us, so we all carry about with us the *body* of sin and death, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* Rom. 7. *In me, that is in my flesh there dwelleth no good thing,* Rom. 7. 18. There is nothing that is *truly* and *spiritually* good, that proceeds from our nature. Whatsoever is good proceeds from the

spirit of God, and the grace of the spirit in us. Corrupt nature that is in us is prone to evil, and nothing else but evil; and if we do not always perceive the buddings and puttings forth of this root, yet it is in us: that evil root sticks in us when it doth not always act in that sensible manner. Now what a humbling consideration is this, that we should carry such a root of evil in us, that bears such a contrariety in it to the holiness of God? The *holy Angels* never had such a root in them, they never had their natures *vitiating* and *tainted* as we have: and the glorified Saints, though sometimes they had the root of original sin in them as we have, yet now they have no such root remaining in them. What matter of humiliation is this to us, that we have that root remaining in us that is so contrary to the holiness of God? The *holy Angels* have it not in them, and the glorified Saints are delivered from it. There is little cause for any creature, the most *perfect, and innocent* creature to be proud; because he is but a creature, and a dependant thing. But how much less cause is there of pride in a *sinful creature*, that carries the marks of his shame

shame about him, and hath lost that purity that was stamp't upon him in his first creation? When we have attained the highest measure of holiness upon earth, yet remember it is not with us as in innocency, we have the root of original sin still remaining in us.

3. Consider what great *eruptions of sin and corruption there have been in us.*

Whatever we are at present, we are by the grace of God. It is by *grace* that we are what we are. But whatever we are at present, hath not the time been, when there hath been great breakings out of corruption in us? I was saith *Paul*, a *Blasphemer*, and a *Persecutor*. Thou that thinkest thou hast received most grace, and hast attained most holiness; hast thou not been so and so? If thou hast not been guilty of scandalous sins, yet have there not many things fallen out in the course of thy conversation, which thou hast cause to be ashamed of? *what fruit*, saith the Apostle, *had ye in those things, whereof you are now ashamed?* Let us remember the things that have fallen out in our conversation, they will be matter of humiliation to us all our days.

1 Tim. i. 16.

Rom. 7. 21.

This

## Remedies against Pride.

This is the first Remedy against pride, to study our own defects and imperfections.

The 2. great Remedy against pride, and that which I take to be the main of all, is this; Let us study the *humility of God-incarnate*. This is certain, no such remedy against pride as the study of the humility of God incarnate, *Learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart*, Matth. 11. 29. *Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus*, Phil. 2. 5, 6. What was the mind that was in Christ Jesus? *He was in the form of God, and yet took on him the form of a servant, and humbled himself to the death, even the death of the Cross*. It is *Austins* observation, That humility whereby God was born of a woman, and by such great indignity and contumelies was brought by men unto death, is the highest medicine by which the tumor of pride is subdued and killed in us. O consider it, The *most Glorious God*, the *most humble man*. God is humble, and shall a worm be proud? Now Christ was *God and man in one person*, and Christs condescension and humility was exceeding great, if we consider him in  
either

either of these respects, as *God* or as *man*.

1. Consider him as *God*, and so his *condescension* is exceeding great.

1. What condescension was it in *God* to come into the nature of *man*, to come into the nature of his own creature, a nature so inferiour to his own? He was in *the form* of *God*, saith the Apostle, and counted it no robbery to be equal with *God*, and yet he was made in the likeness of *men*, and he was found in fashion as a *man*, Phil. 2.

6, 7, 8. One of the ancients expresseth it thus. *He that was the Creator and Lord of all things would become one of mortal men.* He who being in the form of *God* did make *man*, by assuming the form of a servant, he himself was made *man*. O what condescension was this?

*Creator ac Dominus omnium rerum unus volens esse mortaliū, Proinde qui mundus in formā Dei fecit & hominem, idem in formā servi factus est homo. Leo.*

2. The humility and condescension of *Christ* as *God* appears in this, That he was content to *vail* and *hide* his glory in our nature assumed. He was content to have the glory of his *Divinity* covered and eclipsed by the vail of his humanity, and that is the meaning of that expression, Phil. 2. 7. *He emptied himself, taking upon him the form*

*Ἐκένωσεν τὴν*

of

of a *servant*. How did the son of God empty himself? Not by divesting himself of his Divinity; that was impossible; he remained to be God still; It was not possible for him to cease to be God. But the meaning is, He laid aside the manifestation of his glory; He did not divest himself of his *essential* glory, that was impossible; But he laid aside his *manifestative* glory for a time. He was content to have his glory unseen for a time. Sometimes indeed he did *emit* and send forth the raies of his glory in his *miracles*.; But otherwise, he did for the most part keep in the raies of his glory, during the time of his *humiliation*. He was lookt upon as the *Carpenters* son. He was *hungry*, *weary*, exposed to the same *infirmities* as we are, only *without sin*. All this was his *voluntary condescension*. The Son of God when he was in our nature, might always have let forth the bright beams of his *Divinity*, such as should have dazelled the eyes of the beholders. But he was content to have his glory unseen. Now consider it, If he who was the Son of God, and God, was content to have his glory veiled and unseen, do it become us to desire to be seen and admired?

3. But then the depth of his *humility* lay in this; That he humbled himself, *even to the death of the cross*; so the Apostle expresth it, *Phil. 2.* Consider it, The person who gave himself to suffer *was God* though *in the nature of man*, *For their sakes I sanctifie my self*; John 17. 19. The person that sanctifies himself is *God*. So again, *I lay down my life for the sheep*, John. 10. 18. *No man taketh it from me, I lay it down of my self, I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again.* Certainly he that hath power to *lay down* his life, and take it up again, was *more than man*. No man that is a meer man can say thus, I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it up again; therefore he that spake these words was more than man. Now what condescension was it for that person who was God as well as man, to lay down his life for man, 1 John 3. 16. *Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us.* And we may say, hereby do we perceive the great humility and condescension of God, that he laid down his life for us. O what a spectacle of hu-

G mility

mility was it to the *holy Angels*, (think you) to see him hanging on the Cross, whom they knew to be the Son of God, and God, although cloathed with our nature, and whom in his Divine nature they had been inured for so long a time to worship in Heaven? Here was a spectacle of humility indeed! It is

*Remedi m elationis est contumelia Dominice Crucis. Aug.*

*Austins* expression, *The best remedy against pride is the beholding the Lords Cross.* Let us every day take a turn at the Cross of Christ, and let us by the eye of faith behold the Son of God, and God in our nature suffering the greatest torments to make expiation for our pride. What should humble us more than this thought, that God must become man, suffer and die for man, to expiate mans pride? If the death of that person who was God, and who died on purpose to expiate our pride, will not humble us, I know not what will. I may say whilst I was meditating on these things, I found my heart in some measure affected with these considerations; and if you steep your hearts deeply in these meditations, you may possibly find your hearts affected also. O consider the *humility of God incarnate.*



2. Consider him *as man*, so his *humility* was very great. Never so *humility* *Remedy 2.*  
*ble* a man as the *man* Christ Jesus,

*Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, As a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.* *Math. 11.*

One great argument of humility is *submission*: when a person *submits* to bear all that is laid upon him, this is one great argument of humility. Christ was most *patient* and *submissive* to bear all that which God and man laid upon him. *He opened not his mouth*, but as a meek Lamb bare all. When he was *reviled*, he *reviled* not again. And then, as his humility appeared in his *submission*, so his humility appeared in this, that he attributes and ascribes all to the Father, *The Father in me doth the works*, John 14.10. I can of my self do nothing, as I hear I judge, John 6. 30. Now the greatness of Christs humility as he was man, appears from these three or four Considerations, briefly, I pray you weigh them and consider them deeply.

1. In that he knew that he had the fulness of all *habitual grace*, that was possible for a created nature to be filled with. *The spirit of the Lord did*  
 G 2 rest

rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and of might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord, Isa. 11. 2. O consider it, Christ was humble when he knew he had all that grace that it was possible for his humanity to be filled with, and when he knew that he had not the least sin in him; and shall we be proud who have so little grace and so much sin? If Christ was humble when he had perfection of grace and no sin, doth it become us to be proud, who have so little grace, and so much sin?

2. Christ knew that his *humane nature* was personally united to the *Divine*: And this he knew was such a dignity, that no creature was or should be admitted to besides his *humanity*. Now when Christ knew that he had attained that honour, the grace of *union* which no creature was ever honoured with, or ever shall be, but his *humanity*; yet he was most humble under this *dignity*.

3. Christ knew that his *humanity* was to be used as a *conjunct* organ of the Divinity in the work of *mediatorship*. It was by him *as man* that the

Law was perfectly to be obeyed and fulfilled. It was by him that the penalty of the Law was to be undergone, he also *as man* was to make *intercession* for us. This also was such an honour that no *creature* was admitted unto. No creature was ever interested in the work of mediation with God, but *that humanity* of his, *There is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*, 1 Tim. 2. 5. He knew no creature should ever be interested in the work of mediatorsnip with God, as his humane nature was, and yet he was humble under this honour.

4. He knew that after his humiliation, after the work he had to do for the Father, was finished, he should be in the state of his exaltation, be advanced above all creatures, Ephes. 1. 20. *He set him at his own right hand, in the Heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come.* It was *Christ-man* that was thus to be exalted. As he was the *eternal Son* of God, so he needed no exaltation. For being in the *form* of God, he was *equal with God*.

## Remedies against Pride.

But he that was thus to be exalted was *he that was raised from the dead*; so we have it at verl. 20. *which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand, &c.* Now according to his humanity was he raised, and therefore according to his humanity was he exalted. Now consider it, He that knew he should be exalted above all creatures, not only *in this world*, but in *that which is to come*, he was most humble, though he foresaw his exaltation; and that the dignity he should be advanced unto, was such a dignity that no creature should be advanced unto, yet no creature more humble than he. *Learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart.* Oh let us study Christ much, let us study the *humility of God* incarnate: there is no means so effectual to humble us as this.

*Remedy 3.* 3. Let us study the *greatness and majesty of God*. As the *humility and condescension of God* on the one hand, so the *majesty and greatness of God* on the other hand, may be a means to humble us. Now in Christ both of the *e met*, The *humility of man*, and *height of the Deity*. Therefore as his  
humi-

*H. wilkes ha-  
bitus, & ali-  
quid Dicitur.  
Leo.*

humility as man, so the consideration of his *highness* and *excellency* as God, may be a means to humble us. All creatures compared to God are as nothing, you know what the Prophet saith, *All nations before him are as the drop of the bucket, less than nothing, and vanity.* What do we account of a poor bubble that is blown up? Truly all the creatures are but as so many bubbles blown up. The same omnipotency which made all the creatures which we see and behold, could make many more if he pleased. We compare our selves with our selves, we compare our selves with others; but O if we did compare our selves with the *Divine majesty*, then we should see all our wisdom was but folly, our strength but weakness, our utmost perfection but imperfection. It is a known passage, that of *Job*, *Job 42. 56. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor my self, and repent in dust and ashes.* This is a certain truth; nothing so much humbles the soul as *clear sights* of God. When *Daniel* had a sight of Christ in his *majesty* and *glory*, what doth he say? O, saith he, *There re-*

Daniel 10. 8.

*maintained no more strength in me, for my comeliness in me was turned into corruption, and I retained no strength.* Had we right thoughts of Gods immensity, it would reduce us to nothing, it would certainly do so. Take all the creatures and put them all together, they are all as nothing in comparison of God. Therefore there is little reason that *one poor single dust*, as each one of us is, should be proud. Let us study therefore the greatness and majesty of God.

Remedy 4.

4. Consider whatever good or excellency there is in us, it is the gift of God. Have we *wisdom, parts, grace, estate, dignity, honour*, All these are the gifts of God. And is it reason that we should be proud of that which is another's? *what hast thou O man, that thou hast not received, and if thou hast received it, why dost thou boast as if thou hadst not received it, again, who made thee to differ?* Thou wert made of the *same clay* with other men; and if God hath cast more honour upon thee than he hath upon others, thou hast no reason to be proud who wast taken out of the common mass, but to admire sovereign grace who hath bestowed that upon thee, that he hath not upon others.

5. As

5. As a Remedie against Pride, *Remedy 5.*  
 Consider pride is the *perversion* of the  
 end of our *being*. The creature as it  
 was from another, so it was made for  
 another. No creature was made for it  
 self, that is certain, All things were of *Rom. 11. 36.*  
*him, and by him, and to him.* The  
 creature was made for the glory of the  
 Creator. Therefore when the creature  
 exalts it self, and refers all things to  
 it self, it forgets the end of its crea-  
 tion. In Heaven God shall be *all in*  
*all*; this is the perfection of the next  
 world, that the glory of God shall  
 shine forth through all creatures, and  
 by all creatures; and we ought to ac-  
 count it our greatest perfection here on  
 earth to be subordinate to God, and to  
 be used by him for his glory. Now  
 pride makes us distinct and separate from  
 God, who should be referred to the  
 glory of God; so that pride is the per-  
 version of the end of our being.

6. Let us mourn over the ebullitions *Remedy 6.*  
 and actings of pride, and also over the  
 root of it.

1. We should mourn over the ebul-  
 litions and actings of pride in us. It is  
 said of Hezekiah, *That he humbled him-*  
*self for the pride of his heart.* When  
 that

that good man shewed his riches and treasures to the Embassadors of the King of *Babylon*, there was pride in it, and God made him sensible of it; and he humbled himself for the actings of pride. We ought to be sensible of all the buddings and puttings forth of pride, and to be humbled for it; And as we should be sensible of the buddings and puttings forth of pride, so 2. We should be humbled *over the root it self*. *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!* When we do not find these sensible actings and stirrings of pride in us, yet the *root* of it is there. Now we should be humbled that there is such a *root* in us. Pride was the first venom or poyson that was breathed by the old serpent into our nature. Pride is most *contrary* to the *glory* of God, and it is the *core* and *heart* of *all sin*. As the Naturalists say of the heart, It is the first thing that lives, and the last thing that dies; so we may say of Pride, It is the first sin that lives, and the last sin that dies. This should be matter of humiliation to us, that we have such a bitter root as pride in us.

*Remedy 7.* The 7. Remedy against pride is this.

The



The more we find the stirrings of pride in us, the more should we labour to abound in *humility*. Be ye cloathed with *humility*: The more we find the stirrings of pride in us, the more should we labour to put on *humility*. It's one good means to mortifie a *lust*, to labour to abound in the *contrary grace*, to live in the exercise of the *contrary grace*; this the Apostle teacheth us in *Gal. 5. 16*. Walk in the spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. The way for us not to fulfil the lusts of the flesh is to walk in the spirit. The way to keep down corruption is to live in the exercise of grace. When we find our hearts inclined to pride, we should pray for grace that we may find our hearts so much the more humble.

1 Pet. 5. 5.

8. Let us be sure to give God the *Remedy 8.* glory of what he hath done for us, and bestowed upon us. Herod is condemned for this, that he gave not God the glory. We are apt to pore upon what God hath done for us, and to forget the *giver*, whereas we should reflect all upon God, and say, Not I, but the grace of God in me. *AAs 12. 21*

Lastly, Let us labour for a *holy magnanimity* and *greatness of spirit*. There

is

*sancta super-  
bia.*

*Nullum nisi om-  
nipotentissi-  
mum, sapientis-  
simum, & pul-  
cherrimum, facit  
omnia amare  
dignatur.*

*Magna sed bo-  
na superbia.*

is that which some of the *ancients* call a *holy pride*, that is this when the soul having a sense of its own excellency and nobleness, thinks that it is beneath it self, to prostitute it self to these inferiour things. It would be joynd and united to the highest thing. It thinks that 'tis beneath it self to be joyed to any thing but the highest good; *It can vouchsafe to love none above all things, but he that is most omnipotent, most wise, most beautiful.* This is holy pride, when the soul ceaseth to admire every thing but God; when it ceaseth to admire it self, and all creatures, and is wholly taken up in the admiration of God who is the *first, supreme, infinite and eternal perfection.* This is holy pride in the soul when it self and all the creatures seem vile and base to it in comparision of God. This is a *great* but a *good* pride, as one of the *Ancients* calls it. This holy magnanimity of spirit, is in the *Angels* and *glorified Saints*, to whom not only all creatures, but they themselves seem to be vile to themselves in comparision of God whom they love.

*The end of the Fifth Sermon.*

S E R.

# SERMON VI.

2 Cor. 12. 7, 8, 9.

*And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.*

*For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.*

*And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*

3. Observ. **T**HE Observation Observ. 3.  
that next comes  
in order to be  
handled is this.

*That the principal end why God permits and orders it to be so, that his people should be tempted and undergo sore conflicts, it is to keep them from being lifted up. Lest I should be exalted above measure, there was given to me*  
a thorn

*The end of God in Saints Temptations, a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me.* It is very observable that the end of this exercise and conflict of Paul is twice repeated in the text, in the beginning, and end of the verse.

1. It is mentioned in the beginning of the verse, *Lest I should be exalted above measure.*

And then it is repeated again in the close of the verse, *Lest I should be exalted above measure.*

So that clear it is, that the main and principal end of God in bringing his servant under this exercise, it was to suppress spiritual pride in him, to keep his spirit low and humble.

This therefore is the point that now I shall speak something to.

*Dollrine.* That the principal end why God permits and orders it to be so, that his people should be tempted and undergo sore conflicts, it is to keep them from being lifted up.

And here I shall first lay down some propositions for the clearing of the point, And then make some application.

I shall lay down two or three propositions

tions for the clearing of the doctrine.

The first is this, *Pride is such a sin* Propos. 1.  
*that God cannot bear with in his Children.* God indeed can bear with no sin, for he is of *purser eyes than to behold the least iniquity*, as the Prophet speaks, *Hab. 1. 13. And evil shall not dwell with him*, *Psal. 5. 4.* God cannot bear with any sin. But of all sins, God doth in a more peculiar manner set himself against the sin of Pride. Pride is such a sin as doth in a peculiar manner strike at the glory of God, and therefore God in a peculiar manner sets himself against that sin. Hence it is said, *That God resists the proud*, *1 Pet. 5. 5.* God is the *professed enemy* of Pride, and proud persons. God, saith *Luther*, *Is the God of humble persons*, *he cannot bear with pride*; *God* Deus est humilium Deus, non potest ferre superbiam, vult salvam esse suam Majestatem  
*will have his own glory and Majesty kept safe and inviolable. My glory I will not give to another.* Now a proud person would take from God the glory of his Majesty; He would take that from God which is due to God only. A proud person would seem great and excellent himself, and he cares not how the glory of God is eclipsed, so he may seem great and excellent, therefore God sets

*The end of God in Saints Temptations,*  
sets himself against pride above all  
other sins.

*Propos. 2. 2. Temptations when they are sanctified, are a proper means to suppress and take down pride in us. And the Reason is; because temptations are a means to humble us, and shew us what is in our own hearts. Temptations shew us our own weakness and infirmity, yea not only so, Temptations do not only shew us our weakness and infirmity, but they oftentimes shew us the pravity and malignity of our hearts that was latent and undiscovered before. Now temptations discovering to us our infirmities and corruptions are a great means to humble us. For this is a sure rule. The foundation of humility is the knowledge of our own infirmity: Nothing doth so naturally beget humility as the sight and knowledge of our own infirmity, and corruption. Now God by temptation shews us our own weakness and infirmity, yea the pravity and malignity of our hearts, and this is a means to humble us. That temptations are a means to discover to us our infirmity, may be clear to us by an induction of the several sorts and kinds of temptations.*

I have

I have shewed in the opening the *Doctrine of Temptations*, that there are *Divine Temptations*, *Fleshly*, or *Carnal Temptations*, *worldly Temptations* and *Satanical Temptation*. Now it may be clearly evinced that all these sorts and kinds of Temptations, when God exerciseth us with them, are a means to discover to us our infirmity and weakness.

1. *Divine Temptations* will do this: By *Divine Temptations* we are not to understand temptations to sin. The Apostle is expresse for this, *Let no man say when he is tempted, he is tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man*, Jam. 1. 13. But by *Divine Temptations* we mean some *notable trial* which God brings upon his Children. When God brings his children into great *streights*, *difficulties* and *afflictions* that they know not which way to turn themselves, this is properly a *Divine Temptation*. Now these *Divine Temptations* are a means to shew us our infirmities; for this is certain, The *least affliction* which God exerciseth us with, when we are left to our selves is enough to sink and discourage us. *If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength*

H

*The end of God in Saints Temptations,*  
*strength is small.* Now herein have we  
 experience of our own infirmity, that  
 a *little affliction* when we are not sup-  
 ported by *Divine Grace*, will make us  
*faint.* It is true, a *great affliction* when  
 we have supportation by *Divine grace*  
 will not make us sink; the power of  
*Divine grace* is such, that it will bear  
 us up under great afflictions. But on  
 the other hand, the least affliction will  
*overset* us, when we are not supported  
 by *Divine grace*; and we shall be rea-  
 dy to cry out, *no sorrow like to our*  
*sorrow*: though there be thousands that  
 have far greater afflictions than we  
 have. And if God bring us under any  
 great and remarkable trial, then to be-  
 lieve we fall and miscarry without *Di-*  
*vine grace.* Psal. 30. 6, 7. *In my pro-*  
*sperity I said I shall never be moved.*  
*Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my*  
*mountain to stand strong, thou didst*  
*hide thy face and I was troubled.*  
 When we are in prosperity we think  
 we shall never despond more, we think  
 we shall go on triumphing to the end  
 of our days: but God brings a little  
 affliction upon us, and then we begin  
 to pine and droop, this shews us our  
 infirmity. When *Jeb* was in his pro-  
 sperity



sperity he said he should die in his nest; Job 29. 18. but when God brought that sore trial upon him, he cursed the day of his birth.

2. There are *Carnal or Fleshly Temptations*. By carnal Temptations we understand the temptations that arise out of our own hearts unto sin. In me, that is my flesh, there dwells no good thing, Rom. 7. 18. Corrupt nature that is in us is prone to every sin; it is a great expression, that of the Apostle, James 4. 5. The spirit that is in us lusteth to envy, that is, corrupt nature lusteth to envy, and not only to envy, but to revenge, vain glory, and every evil thing. Now these inward inclinations of the heart unto sin, and the lustings after it, do shew us the deep corruption of our nature. We could not imagine that our hearts were so vile and so bad, as indeed they are; did we not find such corrupt inclinations and lustings in them. What is thy servant a Dog? saith Hazael to the Prophet. We are apt to think with our selves, Is it possible that ever I should feel such sinful thoughts and motions as I feel? No one would believe, saith Luther, how great and deep

the corruption of the flesh is, till he be tempted and tried. Temptation draws forth that corruption, and makes it to appear in our hearts, that we would not think were there. Temptation shews the blackness and foulness of our hearts. Now this is a means to humble us; God by temptation represents to us the true hue and pourtraiture of our hearts, and this makes us ashamed.

3. There are *Worldly Temptations*.

By *worldly Temptations* we understand such temptations as are offered to us by external objects. 1 John 2. 15. All that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. The world represents variety of objects to us, that are occasions of temptation to us. The world sets before us the *allurement* of profit, pleasure and honour: and when these *baits* are set before us, then we have too sad *experience* how little we are able to withstand them. Eve her self, when she was in *innocency*, when she saw that the Tree was *pleasant* to the eye, and *good for food*, she took thereof. The spirit of God takes notice of that as an occasion of temptation to her, when she saw that the Tree was  
plea-

pleasant to the eye, &c. Now if she in innocency was led aside by a Temptation from an external object, much more prone are we in our lapsed and fallen state to be carried away by *external objects*. When *Achan* saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and a wedge of gold, then he coveted them, and took them, *Jos. 7. 21.* *Worldly Temptations* are too strong for us to withstand and overcome, unless we have Divine grace to help us.

Some of the *sounder Schoolmen* among the *Papists* tell us, That man in his lapsed state hath not power to withstand any considerable temptation when it is offered. Truly our own experience may tell us more, that we are not able to withstand the *least temptation*, without Divine grace help us; therefore these shew us our infirmity.

4. There are *Satanical Temptations*, and these are temptations that *Satan* himself suggests, and do immediately proceed from him. Now when we are under these Temptations, we have too sad experience, how unable we are to deal with such a powerful and subtil enemy as *Satan* is. He hath many *wiles* and *artifices* to deceive us. Hence

it is that we read of the Serpents *beguiling Eve through his subtilty*, 2 Cor. 11. 3. Satan through his *subtilty* and *wiles* doth circumvent and overreach us before we are aware. When Satan tempted *David to number the people*, how soon was *David* overcome with that temptation, 2 Chron. 21. 1, 2. It might seem a very plausible temptation. Persons would think there was no great evil in it, for *David* to number his people, to know the strength of his Kingdom; but doubtless Satan overreached *David* in that temptation. His end was to lift him up in pride from the strength of his Kingdom. There is so much subtilty in Satans temptations, that we cannot withstand them without the power of Divine grace. It is a saying of *Austins*, *Every believing soul is bound to confess, that as often as we fight against temptations and unlawful lusts, it is not from our own free will, but from the help and assistance of Divine grace, that our victory doth proceed.* And another of the Ancients hath this passage, *No one that is regenerate is sufficient of himself to overcome the stratagems of the Devil, but it is by the daily*

daily help and assistance of God that we overcome these snares that the Devil lays for us; and this is evident from that petition in the *Lords Prayer*, when we are bid to pray *lead us not into temptation*. The meaning of that Petition is, that we ought to pray that we may not be *foiled* and *overcome* by temptation; now if we ought to pray every day, that we may not yield unto temptation, and be overcome by it; it is a certain sign we should yield and be overcome by temptation, had we not daily assistance from Divine grace. Thus temptations when they are sanctified, they are a means to shew us our own weakness and infirmity; and the sight of our own infirmity is a most proper means to humble us.

The 3. Proposition is this, That *Propos. 3.*  
*God in his infinite wisdom, directs and orders the temptations of the Saints, for this very end to suppress and keep down pride in them.* This is evident from the Text it self, *Lest I should be exalted above measure, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, &c.* This thorn in the flesh, *this messenger of Satan, it was given to Paul.* All the temptations that the Saints are exercised with,

*Edw. 3. 12.*

*The end of God in Saints Temptations,*  
 they come either by Gods *permissive*  
 or effective will. If God *permit* their  
 own corruptions to tumultuate in them,  
 it is for their own farther humiliation.  
 It is an expression I have read in *Luther*,  
 That corruption sometimes *rages*  
 in the Saints: though it doth not *reign*  
 yet it may *rage* in a Saint as to a *present fit*. Now when God suffers cor-  
 ruption thus to rage and tumultuate,  
 it is to humble them, and when he lets  
 Satan loose to buffet them; God in  
 these exercises, designs to humble  
 them. God and Satan have different  
 and contrary ends in the temptations  
 of the Saints. Satan always tempts us  
 to this end, to draw us into sin; and  
 God permits us to be tempted to keep  
 us from sin. God knows how to make  
 use of the temptations we are exerci-  
 sed with, so as to turn them to a remedy.  
 There are scarce any temptations that  
 do befall us, but there is *some evil* or  
 other doth mingle with them. It is  
 truly observed by *Austin*, When we  
 overcome temptations most of all, yet  
 we have still reason to pray, *forgive us*  
*our trespasses*. We seldom overcome  
 any temptations so, but there is some-  
 thing of guilt or other that cleaves to

us in dealing with that temptation. To be sure, those temptations that arise from our own hearts, those that we call *Fleshly* or *Carnal Temptations*, there is always something of sin in them. I will not dispute whether there be always sin in *Satanical* temptations: Some have said, that there are some *Satanical* temptations, which are our afflictions rather than our sins; true indeed, if there be nothing of the consent in the will, then they are afflictions only and not sin. But we have reason to fear whether there be not something of our own hearts that joyns in with such temptations. But as for the temptations that arise from our own corrupt hearts there is always something of sin in them. The Papists indeed tell us, that the first *motions of sensuality*, those first risings that spring out of the heart, where there is not the subsequent consent of the will, are not sin: but the tenth Commandment tells us quite contrary. The tenth Commandment tells us, *Thou shalt not covet*; and the Apostle *Paul* expounding that Commandment, tells us, that those first motions of sensuality are sin, when he tells us, *I had not known sin but*

*The end of God in Saints Temptations,*

*but by the Law, for I had not known lust, unless the Law had said, Thou shalt not covet, Rom. 7. 7.* Where he plainly calls the *first lustings* of the heart sin. So that those first risings and lustings of the heart, where there is not a subsequent consent of the will, are sin. And in those temptations that proceed from Satan and the world, there is usually something or other in our hearts that are ready to joyn with these temptations. Now herein doth the *sovereign power* of *Divine grace* appear, that it turns that which hath the nature of a *disease* in it, into a remedy.

Our temptations have something of sin in them, or else are usually accompanied with sin, and yet by the power of sovereign grace God makes them a means to suppress sin. God by shewing to us the pravity and corruption of our natures which is usually discovered to us by our temptations, makes this a means to subdue and mortifie our pride, and God in his infinite wisdom orders our temptations for this very end. *Lest I should be exalted above measure, there was given unto me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me. Lest I should be exalted above measure.*

Thus



Thus have I opened and cleared the Doctrine; I come now to make the Use and application of it.

The first Use shall be by way of *In-Use* 1. *formation*, This may inform us what construction we are to make, and what interpretation we ought to put upon the variety of Trials, Conflicts and Temptations that God is pleased to exercise us with. Certainly all these things are to humble us; and this is the construction we ought to make of them, that these things are sent to humble us. Such as are exercised with *frequent* and long temptations, that have very little intermission in their conflicts; no sooner are they out of one temptation, but another sore trial comes upon them. Such as these are apt to despond and ready to run into despair, and to reason thus with themselves, If God did love them, and had any care of them, would it be thus with them? What! never to be at rest? What! thus to be always upon the rack? But little do we know, the benefit and advantage that comes to us by these *frequent* and *repeated* exercises, by these *long* temptations. It is a good observation of a *learned* and *experienced* man, The fre-

*Crebra certamina  
tentationum  
superbiam con-  
fringunt, infir-  
mitates alias  
insensibiles  
ostendunt.*

frequent conflicts which the Saints have with temptation, are a means to break in pieces that deep rooted pride that is in them, which otherwise would not be so easily broken; and saith he, They shew those infirmities to us, which otherwise we should be unsensible of, and would be undiscovered to us, and they are a means to humble us. This is the good we get by them though we do not think of it; they are a means to mortifie that *deep rooted pride* that is in us, and to discover those infirmities in us, which otherwise we should not discover in our selves. So that when we can see no other end in any great and unexpected trial that God brings upon us, we may alwayes have recourse to this, and say, This is to humble us. This is the constant use we may make of our trials, as to say, This trial, this temptation, this exercise, it was to humble us; this is the discipline of my Father to humble me. Observe what God saith of his people, when the Lord led his people through the *great howling wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; it was that he might hum-*  
ble

ble them, and prove them, and do them good in the latter end, Deut. 8. 15, 16. So that we may safely conclude when God doth exercise us with more than ordinary trials, it is to *humble* us, and *prove* us, and do us good in the *latter* end. Whatever *variety* of dispensations we pass under, though our *conflicts* be very *sharp* and bitter, yet we may conclude, all is to humble us, to reduce us to humility, and to retain and keep us in humility. If such a man as *Paul* needed temptations to humble him, much more do we.

2. This should teach us patiently to submit to this *discipline* that God is pleased to exercise us with. *Use 2.* If *Divine wisdom* think it fit to have us tempted to suppress pride, and keep us humble, it becomes us to stoop and submit to it. No man ought to be angry with the *physick* that is prescribed for his good, and necessary for his health. We may possibly have such reasonings of heart as these: Could not God bring us to his mind and will, without such sharp and bitter conflicts and temptations? Oh but let us remember this is Gods way. It is not for us to think our selves *wiser* than God: but it becomes

comes us to submit to the Divine wisdom. I remember I once heard a wise, holy and experienced Christian, speak to this purpose; I thought with myself that God could if he had pleased have brought me to his mind, and accomplished his will upon me without the frequent trials and afflictions I met with; O but then I considered this was *Gods way*, and that silenced me. We ought to consider this is Gods way and method to train up his children under conflicts, trials and exercises, and this ought to quiet us. We would fain go to Heaven a smoother way, without such trials and temptations: Oh but God sees it meet that we should be tried and tempted; this is Gods way, and it becomes us to submit to it. And however we may think God might bring about his end without these things, yet Gods way will be found the wisest way in the conclusion. And herein doth Divine wisdom appear, *that his strength is made perfect in weakness*. It tends more to the glory of God, that we should *conquer and overcome, under temptations*, than that we should be kept wholly *from* temptations; and it will tend more to our own

own advantage in the conclusion; for, *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the Crown of Life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him, Jam. 1. 12.*

3. By way of exhortation, Let us labour to improve our temptations, so as that they may be a means to humble us. Let us labour to answer Gods end in our temptations; Gods end in permitting us to be tempted, it is to humble us, and therefore our indeavour should be, that when we are exercised by temptations, we may get *humility* by them.

Here the Question may be,

But how may we *improve* our temptations and make use of them, so as that they may be a means to humble us? *Question.*

1. When ever temptations come upon us, let us be sensible of the great danger we are in. God by temptation shews us the danger we are in. Temptation shews us that if God keep us not, we may easily fall into some great snare and intanglement. Temptation shews us, that without Divine grace we are at the brink of ruin. *Answer.*  
Temptation

tion shews us, that if Divine grace do not keep us, we may soon fall into some *foul* and *scandalous* sin. It is not by our own strength that we are kept from *scandalous* sins. When temptation comes, we have experience of that corruption of Nature in us, that would betray us to some scandalous sin, did not Divine grace keep us. Now should not this be a mighty means to humble us, to consider that unless Divine grace keep us, there is not the holiest soul but might be overtaken with a *scandalous* sin? *Let him that stands take heed lest he fall. watch and pray,* saith our Saviour, *that ye enter not into temptation.* Every temptation puts us in remembrance, that there is a whole *chaos* of *evil*, as *Luther* expresseth it, that lies before us ready to swallow us up, if God did not set bounds to the Sea. It is an expression of one of the Antients, Diabolical temptations should put us in remembrance what the adversarie is that we have to deal with. *We wrestle not*, saith the Apostle, *against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

Ephes. 6. 12.

places. They are no mean adversaries, but they are subtil and powerful enemies, that we have to deal with, when we are tempted. Therefore, let us be sensible of the danger we are in. This may be one meanes to humble us to be sensible into what great sins we may fall if Divine grace do not keep us.

2. Let us labour to be sensible of our own infirmities. As when we are under Temptation we ought to be sensible of the danger we are in, that there is a snare laid for us; so we ought to be sensible of our own infirmity, that such is our infirmity, that we may easily be intangled and overcome by temptations that are presented to us. They ought to be great considerations to us. If *Adam* in *Paradise*, If the *Angels* in Heaven did not keep themselves by their own free-will, If *David*, *Sampson*, *Peter*, and other of the Saints did not overcome temptations by the power of grace received; what reason have we to be sensible of our own infirmity? Such is our infirmity; that a little temptation will overcome us without the help of *Divine grace*. *Peter* was overcome by the voice of a poor Maid, when he was

in the *High-Priests Hall*. A little temptation will overlet us if Divine grace do not keep us. Let us not presume of our own strength. He that thinks himself strongest will fall the next moment, if Divine grace leave him and withdraw from him, therefore let us carry a deep sense of our own infirmity.

3. Let us consider, as a means to humble us, *How far corruption hath been stirred up in us by temptation*. When temptation hath been offered to us, have we not oftentimes found corruption rising in our hearts, and joyning with temptation? It is said of *Moses* that holy servant of God, that *They provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips*, Psal. 106. 33. *Moses* was one of the meekest men upon earth, and yet when a temptation came his spirit was provoked, and his corruption stirred, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips. How often do we find our selves exasperated unto passion, and sometimes inticed to sinful desires and lustings by temptation? Jam. 1. 14. *Every man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lusts and inticed*, that lust that is in the heart, that is, corrupt nature, is enticed



eed by temptation; when Satan or the world presents such baits as are suitable to corrupt nature, corrupt nature is ready to joyn in, and close with them. Now what matter of humiliation is this, That temptations when they come, have such a *power* and *efficacy* upon us, thus to *extimulate* and *stir up* corruption? It was not so with *Christ*, the *Prince of this world came and found nothing in him*. He had no *corruption in him*, and therefore none could be *stirred up* in him. It is not so with us; But when temptation comes, it finds corruption in us, and stirs it up.

4. Let us consider what *foyls*, or *marks of shame* at least we have received by temptation. Sometimes temptation prevails so far on us, as to *irritate* and *stir up* corruption: although grace overcome in the conflict, and corruption break not forth into *outward act*. Sometimes the temptation prevails so far in *particular acts*, that the temptation is superior in the combate, and we are foyled by it. Temptation gets the upper hand and draws us into such and such a sin; now what matter of humbling is this? So likewise we should

consider what marks of shame temptation hath left upon us. Truly the remembrance of some temptations may strike shame into us. *Paul* had the messenger of Satan to buffet him, the Greek word signifies to beat with the fist, to beat black and blew. When people are so beaten as that they receive marks and impressions on the face, when their eyes and faces are black with beating, they are ashamed to come into company, ashamed to be seen. *Pauls* temptations were such, as that the remembrance of them struck shame into him. That God should let loose Satan upon us to buffet us with *horrid temptations*, with *Blasphemous Impure* thoughts and the like: although they do not gain the consent of the will, yet these are matter of shame, that there should be that in us, that the Devil hopes to get some advantage against us, otherwise he would not thus assault.

Use 4.

The Last Use is by way of Instruction. This may teach us when God *lets loose* any Temptation upon us, what is the *proper course* for us to take: the proper course to be taken in such a case, is, *presently and immediately* to set our selves

selves against pride, to fight against the sin of pride, and to labour and pray that we may be reduced to the depth of humility. O let us carry this Scripture always in our eye, *Lest I should be exalted above measure, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me.* God in permitting us to be tempted, levels at our Pride, strikes at that sin, therefore we should strike at it. The best way to have the rod removed, it is to answer the end of the rod. Temptation is the rod of God upon us; and the way to have this rod removed is to answer the end of this rod, which is to be humble, *God resists the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. Humble your selves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time,* 1 Pet. 5. The best advice that can be given, when ever we find our selves greatly tempted is this, let us pray much against pride, that pride may be mortified and subdued in us. The sooner our souls are humbled and brought down, the sooner will God take off the rod and restore comfort to us: that is the promise, Isa. 57. 15. *For thus saith the high and lofty one*  
I 3 *that*

*that inhabiteth eternitie, whose name is holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. The sooner we are humbled and laid low before God, the sooner will God take off the rod.*

*The end of the Sixth Sermon.*

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SERMON

## SERMON VII.

2 Cor. 12. 7, 8, 9.

*And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.*

*For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.*

*And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*

**T**Hat which comes now in order to be spoken unto, it is the carriage of the Apostle when he was under this exercise, what course he took when he was tempted, and that is in vers. 8. *For this thing I besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me.* So that the Observation or Doctrine that is next to be spoken unto out of the words is this,

I 4

Doct.

Doct.

Doct. That the proper course that is to be taken by us, when we are under Temptation, it is to pray much; For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. I besought the Lord thrice, that is, often and frequently, a certain number is here put for an uncertain. I besought the Lord thrice, that is frequently, when I was tempted, I was much in prayer, that is the plain meaning. Here I might take an occasion to shew what the nature of Prayer is in general.

Prayer, it is the expression of our desires to God for the obtaining of some good, or the removing some evil. Others describe it that it is the shewing of our desires to him, from whom we hope to obtain what we do desire. But my work is not to treat of prayer at large, and in the general; but my work is to shew how we ought to pray when we are tempted, and this is that the Text leads us unto. When the Apostle was under this sore conflict, and had the messenger of Satan sent to buffet him, then it is that he betakes himself to Prayer, *For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might*  
de-

*depart from me.* Therefore the thing I have to shew is this,

How we ought to pray when we are tempted, when the Lord brings us under any *fore conflict*, or *Temptation*, and here I shall speak to these things.

1. What are the things we should pray for when we are under Temptations?

2. How ought we to pray when we are tempted?

3. Why is prayer the proper course we are to take when we are under any special temptation?

1. What are the things we should pray for when we are under temptation?

There are four or five things I conceive that are the principal things that we ought to pray for when we are under temptation.

1. We ought to pray that we may know the *ends* of God in permitting us to be tempted, and also that we may have *grace* to answer those ends. This is certain, God hath *wise* and *holy* ends in *permitting* our temptations. *Satan* could not have power to tempt us, unless *God* gave him power, and that appears from that Scripture, Luke 22. 31. *And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold*

# What we ought to Pray for,

*hold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. That which is desired is not in our own power; therefore since Satan desires to have us to winnow and tempt us, it is a sign it is not in Satans power to tempt us without Gods permission. Satan must have his permission from God to tempt us, before he can tempt us. Now we ought to pray that we might know the wise and holy ends of God in permitting Satan to tempt us, God doth not afflict willingly, neither grieve the Children of men. Temptations are the necessary discipline that God exerciseth his children with. And if the ends of God were answered in our temptations, God would soon remove the temptations from us. Experienced persons know this to be true, that God soon removes and takes off a temptation when he pleaseth. When persons have been greatly harrassed by temptation, God can all of a sudden hush the temptation and silence it. As Christ rebuked the winds and the Seas, and there was a great calm: So God can all of a sudden take off a temptation that was strong and violent upon us. Experienced souls have found this, that*  
when



when such a temptation hath been so strong upon them, as that they thought they should never be able to get out of it, and disintangle themselves from it, yet God of a sudden hath taken it off from them; therefore it is our concernment to labour and pray to know the ends of God in our temptation, and to give God those ends that make God let loose temptation upon us, and then he can soon take off those temptations that are matter of exercise to us.

2. We ought to pray for *supporting grace* that we may not *faint* under temptation, Ephes. 3. 13. *wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you*, Heb. 12. 3. *Lest you be weary and faint in your mind*. When temptations are great and sore upon us; when they are of more than an ordinary nature, especially when temptations are of long continuance, we are exceeding apt to faint and despond under them. For this is certain, that the strength of a Temptation lies in the length or continuance of it. A person may bear a very great and sharp affliction if it be short, better than a lesser affliction if it be long and continued:  
the

the length and continuance of an affliction is that that makes us weary and faint in our spirits. *Job* when he was under great and sore trials, he bare them very patiently at first; he bare the loss of his Estate, Children, and one affliction after another; but when the affliction was lengthned out, then there was found in him many fits of impatience. So the children of *Israel*, when they were long in the *wilderneß*, and tired in the *length* of the way, then they began to murmur; therefore we ought to pray for *supporting* grace, that we may not despond under our afflictions.

3. We may, with *submission* to the will of God, pray for the removal of the temptation. Thus *Paul* did in the *Text*, for this thing I besought the Lord thrice *that it might ~~not~~ depart from me*, that is, he prayed that the temptation might depart from him: but though *Paul* prayed that the temptation might depart from him; we must suppose that he did this with *submission* to the will of God. He did not simply and absolutely pray that he might be free from temptation, but with submission to the will of God, he

he prayed he might be delivered from the *present Temptation*. Some Temptations may be *good* for us, and they may tend to the trying and exercise of our graces. Jam. 1. 12. *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the Crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.* Some temptations may tend to the trial and exercise of our graces, and therefore we are not to pray that we might be freed from temptation altogether, because some temptations may be good and profitable for us. But if temptations be very *heavy* and *pressing* on us, as *Pauls* was, then with submission to the will of God we may pray to be delivered from such temptations.

4. We ought always to pray that we might be kept from the *taint* and *defilement* of temptation; and that is plainly the meaning of that Petition in the Lords Prayer, *Lead us not into temptation.* When our Saviour directs us to pray, *Lead us not into temptation*, his meaning is not that we should pray that we may not be tempted at all; but his meaning is, that we should pray that we might not be overcome by

by temptation. Our great work when temptation comes upon us, it is to pray that God would not leave us to our selves, unto the weakness and infirmity of our own hearts, nor to the *malice* and *subtilty* of Satan. Wo to us, when Temptation comes, if we be left either to Satans malice and subtilty, or in the hands of our own hearts. Satan is *subtil* enough to *intice* us, & our hearts weak enough to *betray* us, unless *divine grace* keep us. Therefore when ever we are under Temptation, our great work is to pray for divine grace to keep us under our Temptations. 1 Iohn 5. 18. *He that is begotten of God keepeth himself and the wicked one toucheth him not. The wicked one toucheth him not,* how is that expression to be understood? are not the Saints toucht by Temptation? How then doth not the *wicked one* touch the Saints? There is a *touch* of *temptation*, if I may so call it, and a *touch* of defilement; the Saints are toucht with the touch of *temptation*, that is, they feel the *motions* of temptation. O but he that is born of God keeps himself, that is, he endeavors to keep himself, and he prays for grace that

that he may be so kept, that he may not be toucht with the *touch of defilement*. He keeps himself, that is, the grace of God in him keeps him from giving the consent of his will to temptation. And so far as the consent of the will is withheld, so far a man is kept from the *defilement* of temptation. I mean he is kept from the defilement of those temptations that are *from without* meerly. For that we may not mistake here, as for those temptations that arise *from within*, that is, the *first motions* of sin that arise from original concupiscence in the heart, although there be no subsequent consent of the will, these first motions are sin; although when there is a *subsequent consent* of the will, the sin is greater than when there is no subsequent consent of the will. But in those temptations that come meerly from Satan, or proceed meerly from the world and external objects; in such temptations as these are, if there be no consent of the will there is no defilement. It is true, it is hard for us to imagine any temptation offered to us by Satan or the world, but there is some corruption or other stirred by it,

it, and some degree of consent, a *partial* consent of the will; but if we could suppose an external temptation to come, and no corruption stirred by it, nor the least consent of the will, then there were no defilement. A clear *instance* of this we have in our *Saviour*, temptation could not fasten on him, he received no taint, no defilement from temptation, *The Prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me*, John 14. 30. There was no corruption of nature in our Saviour that should incline him in the least, to the least partial yielding to temptation, but it is not so with us. It is hard for us to imagine any great temptation that comes upon us without some motions of corruption, and therefore there is usually some partial defilement. Yet we ought to pray that we might be kept from defilement as much as may be, by not giving the least *consent* of the will to temptation. So much as the consent of the will is kept from yielding to temptation, so far we are kept from the defilement of temptation.

5. Because we usually get some *wound* more or less in the conflict with temptation, even when we are victori-

ous in the *battail*, we should pray for the pardon of those sins that attend our temptations. It is observed by *Austin*, *No one* is such a Conqueror in temptation, but he hath reason to pray, *forgive us our trespasses*.

6. The Last thing we should pray for, is, the *sanctification* of our temptations. We ought to pray that Divine grace might so concur with our temptations, as that they may be a means to humble us; and that our temptations may be a means to quicken us to do those things for which God lets temptations come upon us. God, as I said before, permits temptations to come upon us for wise and holy ends, and we should pray for Divine grace to quicken us to do those things for which God sends temptations upon us.

2. How ought we to pray when we are under temptations?

1. We ought to pray under a deep sense of our own *infirmities*; we ought to have such a sense of our own infirmities as to be sensible that the least temptation is enough to foil us, unless Divine grace help and assist us. It is proper only to *indigent persons* to pray. They that are sensible of no wants, see

no need they have to pray. None can pray aright but those that are sensible of their own infirmity. When we come to pray under temptation, we ought to be sensible of our own weaknesses; how unable we are without Divine grace to overcome our temptations. Satan knows by experience what the *strength* or *infirmity* rather of our *free will* is by the *breach* he made on our *first parents* in paradise. Satan also knows what *habitual* grace can do without the *present assistance* of *actual grace*, by the falls of many of the *Saints* that have been overcome by his temptations: we ought therefore to pray under a great sense of the need we have of *present actual grace* to assist us. Although our wills be never so firmly fortified and resolved as we think against such a sin, yea although we have the habits of grace in us, yet unless we have present actual grace in the same moment that we are tempted, we are like to be foiled, and that shamefully; therefore let us pray under a great and deep sense of our infirmities.

2. We ought to pray *frequently*: For this thing, saith the *Apostle*, *I besought the Lord thrice*. *Thrice*, that is often;



*often*; thrice in a more *solemn manner*: so some learned men understand this expression. Besides *Pauls* ordinary way of prayer, besides that he was wont to pray in an ordinary manner; he prayed *thrice* in a *solemn manner*, about this temptation, so some understand it. A time of temptation, ought to be a time of much prayer; when we are tempted in a more than ordinary manner, we ought to pray more than ordinary. You know what our Saviour saith, *Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you.* We must *ask, seek, knock.* If we receive not upon asking, we must *seek*, and if we find not upon seeking, we must then *knock*; the meaning is, we must reinforce and redouble our prayers. Our Saviour when he was in the Garden prayed three times, *Father, if it be possible, Father, if it be possible, Father, if it be possible*, he repeated his prayer thrice. *Elisba* when he was to raise the Widdows child, prayer thrice over it; and when he came to pray for rain, he *prayed seven* times. And as a learned man observes, he would have prayed seven times more if God had not given him an answer, he was resolved to have conti-

nued praying still if God had not given him an answer. And what do all these things teach us, but that we should not be discouraged, but continue in praying, *for this thing I besought the Lord thrice.*

3. We ought to pray with great *fer- vency*. One end why God sends temptations on us is to *quicken* us to pray- er; therefore when our trials and tem- ptations are more than ordinary, our prayers and cries should be more than ordi- nary. It is said of our Saviour when he was in his agony, he prayed *more earnest- ly*, Luke 22. 44. *More intensely*. When our Saviours sufferings and conflicts were highest, then he intended the strength of his prayer most. When our temptations and conflicts are sharp, our prayers should then be most fervent. Our prayers are oftentimes cold, re- mifs and lukewarm, therefore God sends temptations to set an edge on them, and that we might intend the strength of them.

4. We ought to pray *unweariedly*, if the Lord do not hear us presently, we ought not to give over praying, but ought to continue instant in prayer, Luke 1. *And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought al- ways*

*How we ought to Pray when Tempted.*

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*ways to pray and not to faint.* It is the way of God to defer answering the prayers of his people, that so he might give them the more abundant answer at last; therefore we ought to be unwearied in prayer. *Paul* had not such an answer to his prayer as to have the temptation removed, yet he continued praying, and so ought we to do; though temptations are lengthned out, yet we ought to continue praying: And although the sense of our unworthiness might sometimes discourage us from praying, yet the sense of our own unworthiness ought not to take us off from prayer. *Luther* confesses of himself he was oftentimes discouraged from praying with the sense of his own unworthiness; but at last, saith he, the *spirit of God* overcame in me, by suggesting such thoughts as these are, *whatsoever an one thou art, how unworthy soever thou art, thou must pray, it is thy duty to pray.* God will not be sought unto, neither will he hear for thy worthiness sake, but for his own mercy sake, therefore we ought to continue unwearied in prayer, and nothing ought to take us off from prayer.

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The third and last thing I am to speak to in the doctrinal part, is this.

Why ought we to pray much, when we are under temptation?

*Reason 1.*

1. We ought to pray much, because we have *strong and potent enemies* to grapple with. *We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places,* Ephes. 6. 12. We have all the malice and subtilty of Hell to contest with; and we have the baits and allurements of *profit, pleasure and honour*, which we see the greatest part of men are overcome by. And over and above all this, we have the treachery of our own deceitful hearts to deal with; the *heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked*; therefore having such subtil and potent enemies to deal withal; it concerns us to pray much.

*Reason 2.*

2. We ought to pray much, because our *infirmity and weakness* is more than we think it is. There is not the *least temptation* but will be too hard for us, if *Divine grace* do not help us. As strong as we think we are, and as much

much grace as we think we have, yet when temptation comes we shall soon be foil'd, if Divine grace doth not help us. What the strength of free-will is, we have an instance of in our first Parents in paradise ( and we can never think enough of it ) and we have another instance of it in the *Angels* that fell from Heaven. And how weak we are for all the *principles* of grace we have received, many of the Saints, as *David*, *Peter*, and others are instances of it ; therefore what reason have we to pray for continual supplies of grace ? If the Angels did not keep themselves in Heaven ; If *Adam* in Paradise did not keep himself by his own free-will ; If the Saints of God have not kept themselves by the strength of habitual grace, what are we able to do by our free-will or habitual grace received ? Certainly our infirmity is greater than we are apt<sup>to</sup> think it to be, and therefore we ought to pray from the consideration of our own infirmity.

3. It is one end why God permits *Reason 3.*  
us to be tempted, to *quicken* us to prayer ; you will find it by experience to be true, when God sees his people

cold or remiss in prayer, he doth ordinarily let loose some temptation upon them to quicken them to prayer: and though it be not always so, yet it is frequently so, that some coldness and remissness in prayer doth usually precede our greatest temptations. I do not say it is always so, for God doth sometimes bring great trials and afflictions on his children when they are most watchful, praying, and in the most holy frame. And when trials come upon us when we are in this posture, in a trembling, watchful, praying frame, then these trials are the greatest mercies. And God by putting us into a praying frame before such trials, prepares us for them before they come. Happy is that soul that is a praying, watchful, close walking soul before temptation comes. But ordinarily we shall find that some fit of security hath overtaken us, before some remarkable trial and temptation comes upon us. We do not see the danger we are in of such temptations, and therefore do not pray against them; and therefore God sends temptations to awaken us from our security, and to make us sensible of the danger we are in.

I. This

1. This is matter of *reproof* to us, *Use 1.*  
 that we give way to deipondency, and  
 sinking of spirit, under temptation, and  
 do not take the proper courie that is  
 to be used under temptation. Gods  
 own children are to be reprov'd in this  
 case, they are apt to give way to de-  
 ipondencies, and dejection, and sinking  
 of spirit under temptation, and do  
 not take the proper course they ought  
 to take when they are under it. The  
 proper course we are to take when we  
 are under temptation, is to pray much;  
 the Apostle directs us, *If any man be  
 afflicted let him pray.* So it may be  
 said, is any *tempted*, let him *pray*.  
 Temptation is not one of the least *affli-  
 ctions* the Saints meet with; the Saints  
 conflicts and temptations are oftentimes  
 far more bitter than their outward af-  
 flictions. Now art thou tried, afflicted,  
 ed, tempted: *pray, pray. Prayer* is thy pro-  
 per work: but instead of praying we  
*droop* and despond; or if we pray, we  
 pray but a little, we are soon weary  
 and give over, we think God must an-  
 swer us the very next time we pray,  
 or else we think God doth not regard  
 our prayer. It is an infirmity that is  
 incident to many of the children of  
 God

God to think, If God doth not answer them this day, this week, this month, that then God doth not hear their prayers. But it is one thing for God to *hear* our prayers, and another thing for God to give a *present* and *sensible* answer to them. God doth always hear the Saints prayers, which are according to his will; but he doth not always presently give them the thing they pray for; and it is a great mistake to conclude that therefore God doth not hear our prayers because he doth not presently give us what we pray for. *Paul* prayed that the messenger of Satan might depart, but it did not depart; yet *Pauls* prayer was heard for all that. When we pray for *temporal things*, God doth not always give us those things. God gives us *temporal things*, when *temporal things* are good for us, and when they are not good for us, he denies us those things. But we may take this for a certain rule, If we pray as we ought to pray, we shall have an answer of our prayers one way or other; either we shall have what we ask or something better; and this is certain, *spiritual grace* is far better than any *temporal thing* that we can ask.

And



And it is a sign that we have carnal souls if we do not think so. *Paul* had not his temptation removed, but he had spiritual grace given him, and that was far better than if the temptation had been removed.

2. In the second place, This should exhort us whenever we are tempted to pray, and the *more* we are tempted the *more* we should pray. Here lies the skill of a Christian, when ever any particular temptation comes upon him, then to deal with God much about that temptation. *what* we should pray for, and *how* we should pray, I have already intimated. We should pray to know the *end* of God in temptation, pray for *supporting* grace under temptation; pray to be kept from the *sin* of the temptation, and pray for the *sanctification* of temptation: and with *submission* pray for *deliverance* from the temptation. And we ought to pray with a *sense* of our own *infirmity*, and we ought to pray *frequently*, *fervently* and *unweariedly*. This is the proper course to be taken when we are under temptations. The Devil is afraid of prayer, when Satan seeth that temptation puts us upon prayer, and makes us

us more fervent in prayer, this will cause him to desist from tempting, or to change his temptation. As when an enemy makes an attempt at one fort, and finds strong opposition and resistance there, he leaves that and begins his assault some where else, where he may be less suspected, and thinks to meet with less resistance. *If the Devil find himself strongly opposed in his temptation, he will retire, Resist the Devil and he will flee from you.* And if we can pray, we shall be sure always to have some relief, *For thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee,* Psal. 9. 10. God never forsakes praying souls, Lam. 3. 29. *The Lord is good to them that wait for him, to the soul that seeks him.* It is a memorable expression of one of the Ancients, *God is so good to his people, that he doth not always give them that which they would have, that so he might give them that which they would rather have.* God is able to do for us abundantly above all we can ask or think. God doth not always give us what we do desire, that so he might let us see at last, that that which he doth give us is better than what we do desire.

An

*Bonus Dominus  
sepe non tribuit  
quod volumus,  
ut tribuat quod  
mallemus.*

An eminent instance we have of this in our Apostle in the Text. *Paul* had not the temptation removed from him, but he had that given him which was far better; he had Divine grace given to him, *My grace shall be sufficient for thee.* This was a far greater mercy than the bare removal of the temptation, and this is that which leads us to the next point, which is this,

Doct. *That praying souls shall have a sufficiency of grace to carry them through all their trials and temptations.* *Paul* had not an answer given to him that the temptation should be removed, but he had this answer given him, *My grace shall be sufficient for thee.*

*The end of the Seventh Sermon.*

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SERMON

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## S E R M O N V I I I.

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2 Cor. 12. 9.

*And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*

**I**T remains now that I should speak to the fourth particular in the Text, and that is the *gracious answer* or return that was made to Paul upon his prayer, and that is in these words, *And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee.*

The Observation or Doctrine which doth naturally arise from hence is this:

Doct.

Doct. That praying souls shall have a sufficiency of grace to carry them through all their trials, conflicts and temptations. When Paul had been dealing with God about his temptation, he obtained this answer, *My grace shall be sufficient for thee.* In treating of this observation

servation, there are these things that do naturally fall under our consideration.

1. What *grace* is, And he said my *grace*, what we are to understand by *grace*.

2. To shew how *grace* is said to be *sufficient* for us, how God makes *grace* to be *sufficient* for us; My *grace* shall be *sufficient* for thee. And,

3. *what* that *grace* is that God is wont to afford and communicate to his people under their *trials* and *Temptations*. And afterwards there will be way made to the *Reasons* of the point.

1. What *grace* is, what are we to understand by *grace*, *My grace* shall be *sufficient*, &c.

This Text doth naturally lead me to speak of the Doctrine of *grace*, and truly the Doctrine of *grace* is one of the most weighty and material points in Divinity. *Alvarez* in his Preface to his Book *de Auxiliis*, observes that the Doctrine of *Grace* is one of the chiefest points in Divinity, and that which hath an influence upon all the rest. And as it is a weighty Doctrine, so it is the most *sweet* Doctrine, and  
it

it is to none so *sweet* as to *holy souls*, and to those that have *most grace*; they that have *most grace* will *prize* the *Doctrine* of *grace* most.

The *nature* of *grace* in *general* is something of an *abstruse* consideration, but I shall endeavour to make it as plain as I may; therefore to understand the nature of *grace*, we may take it thus. *Grace* may be considered either in the *cause*, or in the *effect*.

1. *Grace* in the *cause* is nothing else but the *love*, the *favour*, the *good will* of God towards man, 2 Tim. 1. 1. *Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father, &c.* The general notion of *grace* is nothing else but the *love*, and *favour*, and *benevolence* of God towards men. This is the general notion of the word *grace*, and indeed the love and favour of God, the *good will* of God is the cause of all other *grace*, that which we call *grace* in the effect, in a strict and proper sense: I say, the *love* and *good will* of God is the cause of all this *grace*. Jam. 1. 18. *Of his own will begat he us.* The Apostle there speaks of one *special effect* of *Divine grace*, he speaks of *regeneration*. Now he saith this *grace*, the *grace* of

of Regeneration is the fruit of Gods *good will*, of his *own will*, that is, of *his good will* begat he us, so Phil. 2. 13. *It is God that works in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure*. The good will of God, the good pleasure of God is the cause of all that grace that is bestowed on the creature.

But then, 2. There is *grace* in the *effect*. Now *grace* in the *effect*, is the *exerting* or putting forth of the *Divine power*, for the producing of some gracious effect in the creature, 2 Pet. 1. 3. *According as his Divine power hath given to us all things, that appertain unto life and godliness*. It is the *Divine power* that produceth in the hearts of the *elect*, whatsoever is necessary to *life and godliness*. It is the *Divine power* that produceth all the effects of *grace* in the creature. Now *grace* as it is in the *effect*, is either *actual* or *habitual*. That which we call *actual grace*, is the *exertion* or putting forth of the *Divine power* in order to the producing something in us. *Actual grace* consists in *Divine aid and help*, or assistance that is given to the soul. That which we call *actual grace*, consists in those *Divine influences* which

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flow

*Auxilium  
mouens nos.*

*Motio Dei  
transiens.*

flow into the soul. *Aquinas* calls it the help or assistance of God moving of us; this is actual grace, *Psal.* 119. 173. *Let thine hand help me: for I have chosen thy precepts.* Others call this the grace of God that moves and acts us, and they describe it to be a transient motion or act of God upon the soul: this is actual grace.

But then 2. There is *habitual grace*, now that which we call *habitual grace*, it is some effect of grace which is left upon us, which is permanent and abiding in us. So that if we would understand the nature of grace, we must consider that *Divine grace* is either the actual aid and assistance of God moving and acting of us; or else it is some habitual gift bestowed upon us, and inherent in us, when it is so bestowed. Now that which Divines call *habitual grace*, is set forth in Scripture by several expressions. It is called the seed of God, *1 John.* 3. 9. *His seed remaineth in him.* It is called by the name of grace in that known Text, *2 Pet.* 3. 18. *But grow in grace.* To grow in grace, it is to endeavour that the habits of grace which are infused into the soul by the spirit of God, do grow



grow and increase. This habitual grace is also called by the name of the *new creature*, 2 Cor. 5. 17. *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.*

In the next place we are to consider how the *text* is to be understood when it is said, *My grace is sufficient for thee.*

1. By grace here in the Text some understand *grace* in the cause, namely, the *favour and good will of God*, and so they make the meaning to be this, *My grace shall be sufficient for thee*, that is, through my love and favour towards thee, thou shalt be superior to thy temptations, thou shalt be set above thy temptations, thou shalt be enabled to overcome thy temptations; though thy conflicts be sore and sharp, yet such is my love and favour towards thee, that I will take care that thou shalt be set above all thy temptations, thou shalt be superior to them, and overcome them.

2. Others by *grace* in the Text understand actual help and assistance, and so Calvin understands it; by grace he understands the help and assistance of the holy Ghost. Now these *two* being *subordinate*, neither is to be excluded.

I. 2

That

*Auxilium spiritus  
sancti.*

That which seems principally to be intended is the latter; namely, the *assistance* of Divine grace, *My grace shall be sufficient for thee*; the meaning is, thou shalt have actual grace, actual help and assistance given to thee, to assist and help thee in thy present conflicts. Now *actual grace*, being that grace which is here principally intended; we must a little more fully consider the nature of *actual grace*.

Now that which Divines call *actual grace*, it is twofold. It is either actual grace, *exciting* or *quickning*, or else it is actual grace *assisting*. There is *actual exciting* or quickning grace, and *actual assisting* grace.

1. There is *quickning* or *exciting* grace, 1 Cant. 4. *Draw me, we will run after thee*. The Saints must be drawn before they can run. So again, Psal. 119. 36. *Incline my heart unto thy Testimonies*. Divine grace is of that nature, that it puts a new *bent* and *byas* upon the will. The will that was aukward and indisposed to the things of God before, when it hath the influences of Divine grace communicated to it, then it is inclined, then there is a new *bent* and *byas* put upon it, Psal. 80. 18.

*Quicken*

*Quicken us and we will call on thy name.* It is God must excite and quicken us to pray, before we can pray. Not that we should stay off from prayer till we find a sensible impulse to prayer. That may be a great temptation upon a person to say he will not pray, till he find a sensible impulse to prayer. We ought to put our selves upon the duty, out of obedience to the command. The commands of God are, *Pray without ceasing, Pray always, with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance.* These commands are enough to put us upon the duty though we have not an immediate and sensible impulse. But when it is said, *Quicken us and we will call upon thy name;* we ought thus to understand it, that when ever we find our hearts stirred up and quickned to the duty, this is from Divine grace, this is actual grace exciting and quickening of us.

But then 2. There is *assisting grace.* Now *assisting grace* is that *help* or *power* which is given us from God, whereby we are inabled actual<sup>ly</sup> to the performance of what we were stirred up unto by exciting or quickening grace.

The Saints of God may sometimes have a will, but they may want power and ability to do what they have a will to do, Rom. 7. 18. *To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not.* So that there may be a will, but want of power and ability to do what we would. Now here comes in assisting grace. It is exciting grace that gives us the first will. Now when *exciting* grace hath given us the will, then comes in *assisting* grace to give us *abilitie* in some measure to do that which *exciting* grace hath given us a will to do. It is *God that works in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure*, 2 Phil. 13. This *assisting* grace is that which *Paul* speaks of, 1 Cor. 15. 10. *Yet not I, but the grace of God with me.* Here was assisting grace. The grace of God did cooperate with *Paul*, therefore the Schoolmen do commonly distinguish between *operating*, and *cooperating* grace. *Operating* grace is the same with *exciting* grace; it works the first will; and *cooperating* grace is the same with *assisting* grace. First, Divine grace helps us to will, and puts us upon the doing such and such things: and then there is assisting

assisting or cooperating grace, whereby we are enabled to the actual performance of what we were stirred up to do, by exciting or quickning grace.

Now the *virtue* and *efficacy* of assisting grace is seen in two things.

1. In making us to resist or repel evil.

2. In enabling us to perform that which is good. The Apostle Paul speaks of both these together, 2 Cor. 13. 7. Now, saith he, *I pray to God that you do no evil; but that ye should do that which is honest.* Austin observes from this Text, That the Apostle prayed for these Saints, the *inspiration* of a good will, that God would inspire into them a good will; and also that he would give them ability to perform what was good. For what need had the Apostle to pray for them, that they might *do no evil, but do that which was honest*; if so be that the will of it self were sufficiently fortified against evil, and sufficiently inclined to do that which was good without Divine grace? Prayer supposeth a need of that we pray for; a man will not pray for that he supposeth he hath not a need of. Therefore when the Apostle prays

*inspirationem  
bonae voluntatis  
& operis.*

for these Saints, that they might not do evil, but do that which is good; he supposed they needed both, otherwise his prayer was needless. Now Divine *assisting grace* helps as to both these, as to the repelling of evil, and as to performing that which is good.

1. By assisting grace it is that we *repel evil*; by the help of assisting grace it is, that we *do repel Satans Temptations from without*. And that we do *conflict* with the *evil motions* of sin that arise from our own hearts within.

1. By Divine grace it is that we resist Satans Temptations, 1 Pet. 5. 9. *whom resist stedfast in the faith*. We are not called *here* to resist Satans temptations, as if it were supposed, we could resist temptation by our *own strength*. For, consider what is said, 1 Sam. 2. 9. *By strength no man shall prevail*, that is, by his *own strength* no man shall prevail. Therefore when we are bid to resist Satans temptations, it is supposed that it is by Divine grace, and Divine assistance that we must resist his temptations. When *Satan desired to have Peter to winnow him as wheat*, how was it that *Peter* overcame *Satan*? Truly it was not by his own strength,

strength, but by Christs *praying* for him. *I have prayed for thee*, saith our Saviour, Luke 22. 32. And what was it that Christ prayed for *Peter*? Why, he prayed that his *faith might not fail*. *Austin* observes that in this prayer is implied thus much. When *Christ* prayed that *Peters faith* might not fail; he prayed that *Peter* might have a most free, a most strong, a most invincible, and a most persevering will in the faith. *Peter* had not this will of his own, *Peter* had not so firm, so resolved, so invincible, so persevering a will of his own. *Peter* did sufficiently shew his own infirmity, what the impotency of his own free-will was, when left to himself; in that he denied his Master, when the temptation came. Therefore it was Christs prayer for *Peter*, that caused him that his faith did not fail. Truly, if *Peter* had been left to himself, as he failed in that particular act, so his faith would have failed totally and finally. It was Christs prayer, and not the strength of *Peters* will that kept his faith from failing totally.

2. It is by the help of Divine grace that we conflict with the motions of sin

ut habet in se-  
de, liberam,  
fortissimam, in-  
vincibilissimam,  
perseverantissi-  
mam voluntatem. Aug.

sin from within our selves. It is a known Text, Rom. 6. 14. *Sin shall not have dominion over you, because ye are not under the law, but under grace.* That *sin* hath not *dominion* over us, we may thank *Divine grace* for it. The Law shews us indeed what we ought to do, but gives us no *power* to do what it commands us ; the Law shews us what sins we ought to refrain from, but gives us no power to abstain from them ; No, it is *Divine grace* that keeps us from the dominion of sin. Sin therefore hath not *dominion* over us because we are not under the law but under grace. Were we left without *Divine grace*, sin certainly would have dominion. So likewise it is said, *The spirit lusteth against the flesh*, Gal. 5. 16. By the *spirit* there we are to understand the *regenerate* part in a Saint ; as by the *flesh* we are to understand the unregenerate part that is in him. This the *Apostle* in another place calls the *law of sin*. *I my self serve the law of God : but with the flesh the law of sin*, Rom. 7. last. There is the law of sin, and the law of the spirit of life in us. Now the *spirit lusteth against the flesh*, that is, that *habitual grace* that is in the



the heart of a godly man quickned, excited and assisted by actual grace, this wars against the flesh, against the unregenerate part that is in him; and what then? *These two are contrary one to the other.* It is an expression I remember, *Luther* hath, 'There are two

*contrary Captains, Leaders, or Commanders* in us, the *flesh* and the *spirit*. Sunt in nobis duo contrarii de es, caro & spiritus.

The *flesh* and the *spirit* oppose one another. And what is the result of this combate and opposition? *Ye cannot do the thing that ye would.* The flesh or the carnal part in a Believer oftentimes hinders the spiritual part from doing what it would. And the *spiritual part* keeps the flesh from doing what it hath a mind to do. Thus *Divine assisting grace* helps us to *resist* and to *repel* evil.

2. By the help of *assisting grace* it is that we are carried out to the *performance* of what is good and acceptable in the sight of God. It is a great Scripture to illustrate this, *Heb. 13. 20.* *The God of peace who brought again from the dead, our Lord Jesus that great shepherd of the sheep, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you, that which is well pleasing*

*in his sight by Jesus Christ.* We may observe here, 1. It is the *same power* that is put forth for the *producing* of grace in us, that was put forth in raising Christ from the dead. Why doth the Apostle else usher in his prayer with this preface, *The God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.* This intimates that there is the same power put forth in working grace in the hearts of the Saints, that was put forth in raising Christ from the dead. And there is another Scripture that speaks fully to this, 1 Eph. 19. 20. *And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward, that believe according to the working of his mighty power: which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.* So that there is the same power put forth upon Believers, for working faith and grace in their hearts as was put forth in Christ, in raising him from the dead.

2. The Apostle shews us, we must be *made perfect* in every good work. *make you perfect*, the Greek word is a very *emphatical* and *significant* word,  
and

and we may not let it pass without a particular examination of it, *make you* καταρτίζω.  
*perfect*; this word as it appears both from the *Criticks* in the Greek tongue, and also from the use of it in the New-Testament hath two principal significations.

1. It signifies to *Adapt*, to *frame*, to καταρτίζω  
*dispose* a thing, thus the ancient *Cri-* ἀρμύζω.  
*ticks* render this word, by a word that signifies to frame, to fit, to square, to polish, to adapt a thing. And thus we find the word used in the New Testament. It is said of Christ, *a body hast thou prepared for me*, or as it may be rendered, a body thou hast fitted or adapted for me. Thus we read of the vessels adapted for destruction, Rom. σῶμα κατὰ τὴν  
τίσιν ὑμῶν.  
9.22. *What if God willing to shew his* θεὸν κατὰ τὴν  
τιμίαν αὐτοῦ.  
*wrath, and to make his power known, indureth with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction.*

2. The word signifies to repair the defects of a thing that were in it before, and thus the *Greek Criticks* render this word by a word that signifies to perfect and consummate, thus it is used in the New Testament, *Night and day praying that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking*

*in your faith*, 1 Tim. 3. 10. There is the same word that is in the Text. Now both these significations are of great use in this place. The God of peace *make you perfect* in every good work.

1. It is Divine grace that must *prepare, adapt, fit, polish* us, that we may be ready to do a good work. We are not suited to good works, we are not fitted to put forth one act of faith or obedience. It is Divine grace that fits us for the acting of faith and obedience.

2. It is Divine grace that must repair the defects of grace that are in us, and fill up what is wanting in us. Divine grace must *begin*, and *Divine grace* must *consummate* every good work in us. So that by this *one word*, the God of peace *make you perfect*, there is a double error confuted. The error of the *Pelagians* and *Semipelagians*. The *Pelagians* held, that the *beginning* of faith and good works was from *nature*, and the *consummation* and *perfection* of them was from grace. On the contrary, the *Semipelagians* distinguish between faith and works, they affirm the *beginning* of faith was from our selves, but the *beginning* of good works

was

was from grace; but yet that this grace was obtained by the *merit* of our faith, and so by consequence held, the beginning of faith and good works was from our selves, though the consummation of them was from grace. But now this *one* word in the Text confutes both these errors, for the Text shews that the *beginning* and *perfection* of good works are all from Divine grace. It is *Divine* grace that must *begin* good works, and it is *grace* that must perfect and finish good works in us. It is Divine grace that must begin every good work, it is Divine grace that must *frame* and compose us to good works. *We are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus to good works,* 2 Ephes. 10. So that we are created to good works.

3. It is Divine grace that *perfects* good works in us, when they are begun. *The God of peace make you perfect in every good work.* Hence it is that Christ is said to be not only the Author, but Finisher of our faith, Heb. 12. 3. *Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith:* what more clear than these things?

4. The Apostle is not content to say  
make

make you perfect, but he amplifieth and expresseth himself yet farther, working in you that which is pleasing in his sight by Jesus Christ. Here he plainly affirms that it is God that works in us what ever is good and pleasing to him. So that it is clear and evident, that the Apostle ascribes the honour of all to Divine grace. It is Divine grace assists us, not only to resist evil, but also to perform what is good and acceptable in the sight of God, vers. 26, 27. *I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes.* Observe it, It is we that believe and obey. Oh but it is the spirit of God that is put into us, that causeth us to believe and obey. It is a known speech of Austin, It is certain, saith he, that we will, what we do will, it is we that believe, and obey: there is the act of our wills in these things; but it is as certain, that it is by the power of Divine grace that we are enabled to will graciously. As it is certain that we will, what we do will; and as it is certain that we do believe and obey, so it is as certain that it is by the power of Divine grace that we do thus believe and obey. *I will put my spirit within you,*

you, and cause you to walk in my statutes. So that though we walk in Gods statutes, yet it is the Spirit put within us that causeth us to walk in Gods statutes, and to will and do what we do will and do. *It is God that worketh in us both to will and to do*, Phil. 2. 13.

The 2. thing to be spoken to is this, <sup>2. Particular.</sup> How grace is said to be *sufficient* for us, *My grace shall be sufficient for thee*. Grace may be said to be sufficient for the Saints, upon several accounts. There are these things implied in this Phrase.

1. When God promiseth that his grace shall be *sufficient* for us, his meaning is, that he will not leave his people *to themselves*, but give them *Divine aid, help, succour and assistance* in their temptations. This the following words make out to be the meaning, *My grace is sufficient for thee, why for? For my strength is made perfect in weakness*. As much as if it had been said, The grace of God shall be *sufficient* for his people, so as that he will not fail to give Divine strength and assistance to them according to their necessities. Therefore when the Lord

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promiseth a sufficiency of grace (the meaning is, he will not leave us to our selves, but he will give Divine aid, and help, and *assistance* of grace to us, so that we shall have *grace* to *help* in time of need, that is the expression, Heb. 4. last. *Let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need*: then is Divine grace said to be sufficient when we have Divine help and assistance given to us in every time of need. It is a sweet and precious promise, Isa. 41. 17. *when the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them*. Here is certainly a promise of Divine grace. Luther saith of this promise, He knoweth not whether there be any promise more effectual in the whole Scripture, for the comforting afflicted consciences than this promise. Here is a promise of Divine grace, and the grace that is here spoken of, is either to be understood of the *Doctrine* of grace, viz. the *Doctrine* of the Gospel, or of the *Spirit* of grace. It seems clearly to be a prophesie concerning the *Gentiles*, when they



they shall thirst after the Doctrine of the Gospel, and the spirit of grace, what then? saith the Text, *I the Lord will bear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.* That they did desire grace, this was some beginning of grace, *To desire the help and assistance of grace is the beginning of grace.* It was a sign that the grace of God had been at work in their hearts, that they began to seek after grace. When the poor and needy seek for water, that is, when they seek after grace, well, but what is the issue? *I the Lord will bear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.* God is never wont to leave them destitute of grace, who are *breathing* after grace. The very desire of grace, is the beginning of grace; and the same grace that hath wrought a desire in us after grace, will also give us the grace that we do desire, for it is God that works in us, *both to will and to do.*

*Desiderare  
auxilium gra-  
tie, incipit gra-  
tia. Aug.*

2. When the Lord promiseth his grace shall be *sufficient*; his meaning is, that he will give *suitable* and *proportionable* grace to our temptations and trials. He doth not only promise to give us *some* grace, but *suitable* grace; grace

*suitable and proportionable to our trials and temptations. My grace shall be sufficient for thee: the meaning is, According to the nature, quality and greatness of our trials and temptations, so shall our strength be. If our temptations be more than ordinary, we shall have more than ordinary assistance, and greater measures of grace. A pregnant Scripture we have to confirm this, 1 Cor. 10. 13. There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*

Two things are here promised.

1. *A gracious Issue to the temptation.*

2. *Strength proportionable to the temptation whilst we are under it.*

1. One thing here promised is a gracious Issue unto the temptation. God will *make way for you to escape*. We ought to distinguish the temptation into the beginning, and the end, every temptation hath an end as well as a beginning. We see the beginning and progress of a temptation, but so weak is

is our faith, we are not able to see to the end of it; but now the word tells us, it shall have an end, he will *make way* for us to escape. Therefore we ought to labour by the eye of faith to see to the end of our temptations. Could we by the eye of faith, see to the end of our temptations, it would greatly relieve us under them; Now faith the *Apostle*, *God will make way for us to escape.*

The 2. thing promised is proportionable strength to the temptation whilst we are under it. God is faithful who will not suffer ye to be tempted, *above what you are able*; we are not able to bear the least temptation. Why then is it said that God will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able? Are we able to stand under any temptation? No certainly, the least temptation is enough to overset and overbear us, if we be left to our selves. Therefore are we taught to pray, *Lead us not into temptation*; certainly, if we were able to overcome temptation by our own strength, our Saviour would never bid us to pray, *Lead us not into temptation.* When we are bid to pray, *Lead us not into temptation*, we are in effect

bid to pray for Divine grace to keep us from being overcome by temptation; and if we must pray for grace to help us against temptation, it is a certain sign we have not strength of our selves to deal with any temptation without Divine grace. How then is it said, that God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able? The meaning certainly is this, God will not suffer you to be tempted above what his grace will enable you to grapple and deal with the temptation. God will so moderate, order and qualify the temptation it self, and he will give such *supplies* of *spiritual strength* to you, that you shall be able to stand under it; for so it follows, *That ye may be able to bear it.* Did not Divine grace assist us, we should not be able to *bear* the temptation, but we should certainly fail under it; therefore the Lord promiseth us a *sufficiency* of grace and strength to *bear us up* under the temptation.

I shall proceed no further in the explication at present, but come to a little *Use* and *Application* of what hath been already opened of the Doctrine of Divine grace.

I. Learn

1. Learn from what hath been open-Use 1.

ed concerning the *Doctrine* of grace, that there is little reason why men should *magnifie* nature, and cry up the power of nature so much. Some of the *Antient Philosophers* cried up the power of nature, and tell us, that men are born with the seeds of *vertue* in them. The *Pelagians* of old affirmed that nature and *free-will* was sufficient of it self as to the *acts* of obedience without *internal grace*. And some in our days cry up *moral vertue*, and count it a great crime for any man to make a difference between grace and *moral vertue*. But let us consider this Text, We may find enough in this Text to confute all these *notions*; consider what is said here unto *Paul*, *My grace is sufficient for thee*. Why is it that God promiseth his grace to *Paul*? Some magnifie the power of nature, and cry that up: and some magnifie *moral vertue*, and level grace with it, making moral vertue and grace all one. Now let us consider, had not *Paul* as much of nature, as much of the strength of free-will as other men, had he not as much *good nature* in him as other men? Nay, was not *Paul* brought to as high

a pitch in *morality*; had he not as much *moral vertue* in him as other men? He saith of himself, he was brought up a *Pharisee*; and the *Pharisees* were the *strictest sect* among the *Jews*, inasmuch that it was a saying among them, If but two men went to Heaven, one would be a *Pharisee*. Now *Paul* was a *Pharisee*, and he saith, *as touching the Law he was blameless*, Phil. 3. 5. Yea, over and above all this, *Paul* had the habits of *supernatural grace*, and a great measure of *supernatural grace*. 1 Tim. 1. 14. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ was exceeding abundant through faith, and love which was in Jesus Christ*. Yet notwithstanding all this, notwithstanding the goodness of *Paul's* nature, the power of free-will, notwithstanding the height of *morality* he had attained unto, *that he was blameless touching the Law*; notwithstanding the *habits of supernatural grace*, yet he stood in need of *actual grace*, of *actual assistance* in his temptations, for otherwise this *promise* had been in vain. What need had *Christ* to have told *Paul*, *My grace shall be sufficient for thee*? He might have spoken to *Paul* in this language, Look to thy self  
*Paul,*

*Paul*, thou hast strength enough to repel thy temptations ; thou hast the power of nature, the strength of thy free-will, the habits of grace, and these are weapons enough to furnish thee against thy temptations. But on the contrary, *Christ* tells him, *My grace shall be sufficient for thee* ; and what doth this but plainly intimate, that *Paul's* free-will, the power of nature, nay, the power of habitual *grace* received, had not been sufficient for him, had not present actual grace assisted him ? God doth not promise us that which is in our own power. If he promise *his grace* shall be sufficient for us, it is a certain sign that without grace we can do nothing.

2. Let us labour to see the necessity Use 2. and excellency of Divine grace. When God would promise *the best thing* to *Paul* that he could give him, he promiseth *divine grace* to him, *My grace shall be sufficient for thee*. O the sweetness that is in Divine grace ! O the unutterable, inexpressible sweetness of Divine grace !

*Austin* observes that *Divine grace* consists in a certain *spiritual suavity* that is let in upon the soul.

I may

I may have occasion hereafter to shew the reason of that *unutterable sweetness* that is in Divine grace, and there is a great account to be given of it. Certainly if we have indeed *tasted that the Lord is gracious*, as the expression is, *1 Pet. 2. 3.* we shall find such a sweetness in grace, that we never found in any thing else. And if we do not find unutterable sweetness in Divine grace, above what we find in *external things*, it is a certain sign we have but a little grace. Carnal men dote upon carnal pleasures, but the reason is, because they think there is no higher sweetness. *Austin*, that *holy man* professeth, that God had allured him with the sweetness of his grace, and now it was most sweet to him to want other sweetneses. O let us labour to experiment the sweetness of Divine grace. If once we have experimented the sweetness of Divine grace, we shall value that above all other sweetneses whatsoever; but of this more hereafter.

*The end of the Eighth Sermon.*

SERMON



# S E R M O N IX.

2 Cor. 12. 9.

*And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*

**T**Hat which we were last treating of in the Doctrinal part, was, how grace is said to be sufficient for the Saints; and two particulars have been already mentioned.

The 3. Particular is this, Gods grace is said to be sufficient, in that Divine grace shall not be *wanting* when it is *necessary*. As God will give out grace suitable to the trials and temptations of his Children; so he will give out grace to them in the *fittest* and most *opportune* time, 2 Cor. 6. 2. I have heard thee in an *accepted time*. God may, and oftentimes doth permit things to come to *extremity* with his people, but when it is come to *extremity*, then he

3 Particular  
how Grace is  
said to be suf-  
ficient.

he is sure to help them. You know what was said in that case, *In the mount will the Lord be seen.* When Isaac was just ready to be sacrificed, and the knife put to his throat, then did the Lord step in and help. So likewise, Jonah 2. 2. *I cried by reason of my affliction to the Lord, and he heard me; out of the belly of Hell cried I, and thou hearest my voice.* Jonah was in the whales belly, which was to him in his apprehension as the belly of hell, because he apprehended *Divine displeasure* in it; there he saw no hope of deliverance, but then did he cry to the Lord, and the Lord heard and delivered him. It is an observation of *Luther*, God doth many times not hear his people till it come to the very last sigh and groan that is in their hearts, and when they can pray, and sigh, and groan no longer, then God hears them. Now then is *Divine grace* said to be sufficient, when grace steps in and helps us in the most *opportune* time, in the very *nick*, and utmost time of extremity, *Psal.* 116. 3. *The sorrows of death compass me, and the pains of Hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. What then? I was brought low, and the Lord helped*

helped me. So in another place, *who remembered us in our low estate, for his mercy endureth for ever.*

In the last place, Grace is said to be *sufficient*, when, *as* our temptations and trials are continued and *lengthned* out, *so* Divine grace is *continued* and *lengthned* out. If God should give us Divine help and assistance at one time, and withdraw it from us at another time, we should certainly fail. But then grace is said to be sufficient when there is a *continuation* of *Divine* grace: and as our temptations and trials are lengthned out, so divine grace is continued and lengthned out to us, and this seems to be the plain case in the Text. *Paul* could not obtain freedom from his temptation, but he obtained this answer, that Gods grace should be sufficient for him; the meaning is, God would not so answer him, as to remove the temptation from him; the temptation should continue still; yet *Paul* should have this answer, that he should not be deserted in point of grace; grace should continue constant with him, till the temptation was brought to a period. And thus *grace* is said to be *sufficient* for us, when though our temptations

tions are great and of long continuance, yet we have grace given to us to counterbalance them, and to make us to bear up under them. It is an emphatical expression, 1 Cor. 10. 13. *God will with the temptation make way to escape that we may be able to bear it.* Observe that expression, *with the temptation*; that expression, *with the temptation*, seems to intimate thus much clearly, that the temptation may be lengthned out, that it may be continued for a long time. Yea, but Divine grace shall be continued all the while; though the temptation continue, yet Divine grace shall not be wanting; there shall be *grace* with the temptation, that is, *grace* and *temptation* shall run *parallel*; the temptation shall last no longer than Divine grace is continued and lengthned out to us, Rom. 14. 4. *God is able to make him stand.* It is spoken of such as are *weak* and *infirm* in grace. Now God is able to make them *stand*, when we are never so weak, and infirm, and impotent in our selves, Divine grace is *able* to make us stand, and if we have recourse unto it, *will* make us stand.

Thus I have shewn what grace is, and

# What Grace it is God gives, &c.

and how grace is said to be sufficient.

The 3. Particular that is to be spoken to in the *Doctrine*, is this, *what* that grace is that God affords to his people under their conflicts, trials and temptations. *My grace shall be sufficient for you.* What is this grace that God affords and communicates to the souls of his people when they are under temptations, that I shall open to you in three Propositions briefly.

1. God gives to them *corroborating* or *strengthening* grace to manage their temptations, and to help them to grapple and conflict with them. It is one property of *Divine grace* to *corroborate* and *strengthen* the soul, *strengthened with might by his spirit in the inward man*, Eph. 3. 16. *Strengthened with all might according to his glorious power, &c.* Col. 1. 11. The God of all grace *settle, strengthen, and establish you*, 1 Pet. 5. 10. *The God of all grace*; It is the property of *grace* to *strengthen*, to *corroborate* the soul. We are insufficient of our selves to resist or withstand the least temptation. Now this is one effect of *Divine grace*, that grace enables us to resist, withstand and repel a temptation. Whatever we may think of our

our selves, were it not for the help of Divine grace, we should yield to the first touch and impression of a temptation. Now Divine grace helps the infirmity of the will, which would soon yield, and make no resistance, did not Divine grace fortifie and strengthen it.

*Sollicitum est  
infirmi voluntatis humanæ, ut divina  
gratia indeclinabiliter et insuperabiliter a-  
gatur. Aug.*

It is a memorable passage of *Austin*, God, saith he, hath provided against the infirmity of mans will by the help of Divine grace, by which it is so affected as not to be turned aside or overcome; so that although it be weak and infirm of it self, yet it shall not be overcome by any difficulty. And that which he farther adds is very remarkable: So it comes to pass, saith he, that the weak and infirm will of man, by the strength of Divine grace perseveres in a little good, whereas the sound and strong will of the first man, did not persevere in a greater good. If you consider it, our first Parents when left to themselves and the liberty of their own will, did not overcome a lesser temptation. *Adam* when in Paradise being left to the freedom of his own will, did not by the strength of his own free-will overcome the first temptation offered to him. But now Divine grace inables them

who

who are under the power of it, to resist greater temptations. The *first Adam* left to the freedom and liberty of his own will, was soon overcome by the *first temptation* offered to him. The *second Adam*, the Lord Jesus Christ, that was assaulted with all manner of temptations, being corroborated and strengthened by Divine grace was overcome by *none*. So that we may clearly see the power of free-will, and the power of free grace in the *two Adams*; The *first Adam* being under the power of his own free-will, was overcome by the first temptation. The *second Adam* being under the power of Divine grace overcame all temptations.

2. God gives to his people *supporting grace*, to keep them from fainting under their temptations. We are exceeding apt to faintings and despondencies under our conflicts, Heb. 12. 3. *Consider him that indured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds. Long afflictions, long exercises and temptations do dispose us to fainting and despondencie;* (and experienced souls, souls trained up under conflicts, know this to

be true) yea not only so, but they have a far worse effect sometimes, they sometimes dispose the children of God to hard thoughts of God, and repinings against God, and to unworthy speeches of God. A sad instance of this we have in very holy men, in *Job* and in the Prophet *Jeremiah*, though they bore their afflictions a long time, with a great deal of patience and calmness, yet having been under their afflictions for some time, they brake forth into imtemperate speeches and *fore fits* of *impatience*. And both the one and the other of them was found *curſing* the day of their birth; which shews what the effects of long trials and exercises is, unless there be Divine grace to support and keep us under them. Now Divine grace so far as it is given to us keeps us from these despondencies, that we be not tired out with the length of our temptations, *Isa. 41. 10. Fear not, I am with thee, be not dismayed I am thy God, I will strengthen thee, yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.* God upholds his people under their temptations by Divine grace, so as to keep them from fainting under them, *Pſal. 27. 13. I had faint-*



to his People under their Temptations.

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*fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the Land of the living.* God keeps his people from fainting, by stirring up *faith* and *hope* in them, that they may see a *gracious Issue* of all their afflictions. It is a great relief to the Saints under their afflictions and temptations, to hope that things shall end well at last; *Though I walk in the midst of trouble thou wilt revive me,* saith *David*, Psal. 138. 7. And thus Divine grace helps the Saints and keeps them from fainting, by keeping alive *faith* and *hope* in them, that things shall go well with them at last.

3. And Lastly, God gives to his people *victorious* or *conquering* grace to enable them to overcome temptations; *Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.* The grace of God that is in the hearts of the Saints will make them superior to all their temptations.

But you will say, doth not experience tell us to the contrary? Do not we see many of the Saints of God lamentably foiled and worsted by temptations? Was not *Sampson*, and *David*, and *Peter* overcome and foiled by

*Objection,*

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their

their temptations? How then is it that Divine grace is victorious in the Saints, and makes them overcome their temptations?

*Answer.*

To this I Answer, That though the Saints of God are foiled by some particular temptations, yet Divine grace overcomes in them at last. Though *Sampson* had several foiles, yet his faith got the victory at last; and that appears from hence, that he is put upon record for one of the Worthies of God and eminent in faith, *Heb. 11.* And so *Peter* and *David*, though they were foiled by temptation, yet they were recovered from their falls by the power of Divine grace. *David's* repentance, and *Peter's* repentance were as eminent as their falls had been. And the fall of the incestuous person in the Church of *Corinth*, together with the defilement that came on the Church by reason of it, was followed by such an after-work of repentance, both by the person himself and the whole Church, as that the Apostle faith they had approved themselves to be clear in that matter, pure, chaste in that matter, so the word signifies. So that as the falls of some of the Saints have

<sup>2</sup> Cor. 7. 11.  
<sup>2</sup> A. 7. 85.

have been eminent, so their repentance hath been as eminent; Divine grace is victorious in the hearts of the Saints at last; though the Saints may receive a foil in particular temptations, yet Divine grace overcomes at last. *To him that overcometh will I give to sit with me on my throne*, Rev. 3. 21. It is by the help of Divine grace that we do overcome. Now the *victoriousness* of Divine grace appears in two things.

1. The *victoriousness* of Divine grace appears in this, in inabling the Saints to *persevere* in the *spiritual* conflict, 1 Tim. 6. 12. *Fight the good fight of Faith*; whilst a man continues *fighting* he is not *overcome*. The Saints are inabled to continue fighting to the last. Hence is that of the Apostle Paul, *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, &c.* <sup>2 Tim. 4. 7. 1</sup> Paul continued fighting to the last, and herein doth the *victoriousness* of Divine grace discover it self, that it makes the Saints keep the field, they go on fighting to the last.

2. The *victoriousness* of Divine grace appears in this, in inabling the Saints to *persevere* in a way of *faith* and obedience to the end, Rev. 2. 7.

*Be thou faithful to the death.* They could not be so, did not Divine grace help them. Rom. 2. 7. *To them who by patient continuance in well-doing, &c.* observe the expression, *by patient continuance in well-doing.* The Saints *vic-toriousness* appears in this, in their *patient continuance in well-doing.* Now it is Divine grace that inables them unto this, Jer. 32. 40. *I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.* What is the meaning of that? that is, saith Austin, *Such and so great shall that fear of mine be that I will put into their hearts, that they shall perseveringly adhere to me.*

*Talis ac tantus  
erit timor meus,  
ut mihi perseve-  
rans adhaere-  
ant.* Aug.

*Si in nullo glo-  
riand m, quan-  
do nostrum nihil  
sit, profecto nec  
de ob. dientia  
perseverantissi-  
ma gloriandum  
est.* Aug.

Our continuance and perseverance in obedience, it is as well from Divine grace as the beginning of it. It is another speech of Austin, *For as much as we ought to glory in nothing of our own, since nothing is our own, we ought not to glory in our most perseve-ring obedience.* It is by Divine grace that we persevere in obedience; the same grace that makes us to begin in a way of obedience at first, is that that makes us persevere and continue in a way of obedience to the end.

Thus I have shewn you what that grace

grace is that God is wont to afford to his people, under their trials, conflicts and temptations.

The 4. and last thing that remains briefly to be spoken to in the doctrinal part, is the grounds and reasons of the point.

Why is it that *praying souls* shall have a *sufficiency of grace* to carry them through their *conflicts* and *temptations*. I shall touch at the Reasons very briefly.

1. The first Reason is, Because God *Reason 1.* loves the prayers of his people and delights in them. *The prayer of the upright is his delight*, Prov. 15.8.

2. Reason, As God loves the pray- *Reason 2.* ers of his people, why, so he will be sure to *answer* their prayers one way or other, Matth. 7.8. *Everyone that asketh receiveth, whosoever seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.*

3. Reason is, As God delights in the *Reason 3.* prayers of his people, so he delights in no prayers more than in those that are made for *Divine grace*, Matth. 5.6. *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness.* He doth not say, that they that hunger after this and that temporal thing shall be satis-  
N 4 fied,

fied, but they that thirst after righteousness, after spiritual and Divine grace, they shall be satisfied, Luke 11. 13. *If ye being evil know how to give good things to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him?* If his people ask grace and the spirit from him, this is the most pleasing request, and this request shall be sure to speed, Isa. 41. 17. *When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Jacob will not forsake them.* What is the water there spoken of? Certainly it is Divine grace. When they seek water, that is, when they seek Divine grace and the influences of the spirit, *I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Jacob will not forsake them.* God is not wont to deny the prayers of his people when they ask Divine grace of him, *God resisteth the proud, but he giveth grace to the humble,* 1 Pet. 5. 5. God is most delighted to give grace, and he is most pleased when his people ask grace.

4. Reason is this, The *desires* that are in us after grace, are some *beginnings* of grace; to desire the *help* of Divine grace is some beginnings of it. For we could not *so will*, that is, *will* Divine grace, did not God inspire that will into us, for it is *God that works* in us *to will*, as well as *to do*. 1. It is *God that works in us to will*; it is *we* that *will* indeed, but it is *God that helps* us to will; for the *preparations of the heart* are from God. 2. God having given us that grace to *will* and desire grace, he *crowns his own grace* in us, he crowns that grace with success. He works in us to will, *and to do*, of his good pleasure, Phil. 2. 13.

Reason 4.

Desiderare  
auxilium gra-  
tie est initi-  
um gratiae. Aug.

Prov. 16. 1.

Lastly, The end why God brings us under *conflicts* and *temptations*, it is, that his *grace* might be *seen* in helping of us. This is exprest here in the Text, *My strength is perfected in infirmity*. Therefore if God should deny us grace under temptations, he should lose one of his main and principal ends in permitting us to be tempted; for one of Gods main ends in permitting us to be tempted is, that the power of his grace might be seen and mag-

Reason 5.

magnified in us. It were not possible for the Saints to stand or bear up under their trials and temptations, did not Divine grace assist them. Now if God should withhold his grace when they need it and cry to him for it, God should lose the honour of his own grace which he delights to magnifie and illustrate.

These are the reasons of the point.

We come now to make the Use and Application of the Doctrine.

*Use 1.*

The first Use may be by way of *Information*. This point may inform us, that mans *free-will* is not sufficient of it self, *without Divine grace*, to resist temptation, or indeed to do any thing that is spiritually good. This inference doth naturally arise from the Doctrine, If *Paul* had had a *sufficiency* of himself to have grappled with his temptations, God needed not have promised his grace to him. But now when God promiseth that his grace shall be sufficient for *Paul*, that is a certain argument that *Pauls* own ability, and the strength of his own Free-will was not sufficient of it self, to help him to overcome his temptations without Divine grace. What need were there that



that Gods grace should be promised to us, to be sufficient for us, if our Free-will were sufficient of it self, without Gods grace to carry us through our temptations? This *Idol of Free-will* forged by *proud nature*, which would fain retain that *excellency*, which man was only possesst of *before his fall*, is that which hath been adored in the world all along. The *Pelagians* of old held that *free-will* was *untouched*, *unmaimed*, not *hurt* at all, and that mans will was sufficient of it self, if it pleased, to obey the commands of God. The *Semipelagians* held that free-will was *wounded* indeed and *maimed*, but then it was not *wholly corrupt*, and therefore they attributed mans conversion partly to grace, and partly to the free-will of man, and so divided the matter, *partly* between the *grace* of God, and *partly* between *mans will*. The *Papists* in the *Council of Trent* condemn this as a great *error* of the *Protestants*, that they hold that after the fall of *Adam* free-will is lost. Now when they are pleased to fasten this opinion on the *Protestants*, that free-will is lost; certainly no man was ever so absurd as to imagine that that natu-  
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ral power or faculty of free-will was lost. Man hath still his natural faculties left to him since his fall. His understanding remains, and his will which is a *free power*, and hath a power and liberty of election in it, this facultie still remains in him. Neither do the *Protestants* affirm, that the will hath lost its liberty in *civil, natural* and *political* matters; (although we must suppose, that even in these things the *Divine Providence*, that governs all other things, hath a supremacy over the will of man, and governs it in such away as is consistent with the liberty of the will.) But that which the *Protestants* affirm is this, that since the fall of *Adam* the will hath lost its liberty to that which is spiritually good. The *free-will* that they deny is free-will to good, there is no free-will in man since the fall to that which is spiritually good. The will retains its liberty to sin still, it freely, yet necessarily wills sin, but it cannot will good, and to this agreeth the *Doctrine of Austin*, *Free-will is sufficient as to evil, but it is nothing at all as to what is good, unless it be helped and assisted by the omnipotent good.* Without the power of *omnipotent grace*

*Libertatem Arbitrii in ad malum sufficit, ad bonum autem nihil est nisi adiuvetur ab omnipotente bono.*  
August.

grace  
have  
thin  
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selve  
Ever  
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But  
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*grace* the Scripture teaches us, that we have not sufficiency of our selves to think a good thought. Nay, we are so far from having a sufficiency of our selves to have a good thought, that Every thought and imagination of mans heart by nature is evil, only evil, and continually evil, Gen. 6. 5. Evil thoughts do naturally proceed from us. But we are beholding unto Divine grace for every holy thought; and what should this teach us, but to be exceeding humble in our selves, and to think meanly of our selves? It is a great saying of Calvin, The Foundation of our Religion is humility. Truly that Religion that exalts self, will not be found to be a good Religion in the conclusion. The whole of the Gospel (if we understand what the Gospel is) it lies in this, to shew us that all our Salvation must be from grace, and grace alone. Deny this, and we overthrow the whole frame and fabrick of the Gospel. *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.* Matth. 5. 3.  
 Till we are emptied of all high thoughts of our own sufficiency, we are not Subjects capable of receiving Gospel grace, for the Gospel offers grace to them that have

# 204 More Uses of the Doctrine of Grace

Use 2.

have *nothing*, to them that are *poor*.

In the second place, this shews us the excellency of *Divine grace*. When the *Lord* would give the *best thing* to *Paul* that he could give him, what is it that he doth promise to him? He promises grace to him, *My grace shall be sufficient for thee*. He doth not promise to give to *Paul* that which he prayed for. *Paul* prayed to be delivered from his temptation, but God would not give him that, but he gives him that which is far better, he gives him *Divine grace*, he saith, *My grace shall be sufficient for thee*, this shews us the excellency of *Divine grace*. O that we knew the excellency and sweetness of *Divine grace*! Fain would I, if I were able, set before you a little the excellency and sweetness of *Divine grace*, to make my own soul and yours more in love with it. There is infinite beauty, pleasantness, delightfulness and sweetness in *Divine grace*. Those sweet and fresh gales that we are sensible of in the *spring season* are not so sweet to our senses, as the air and sweet gales of *Divine grace* are to an holy soul, that hath experience of them. I shall instance only in one particular at

pre-

present; to shew the sweetness of Divine grace, though in another discourse I shall set before you more at large the excellency and sweetness of Divine grace. And the *paticular* I shall mention is only this.

1. It is all one what condition we are in, if we have but the *gales* of *Divine grace*, and are *acted* by Divine grace in every thing. If we be in *prosperity*, *grace* will make us *spiritual* in the use of all our *comforts*, *grace* will shew us *God* in every *comfort*, *grace* will cause us to *find* out *God* in every thing that we enjoy, and lead us to *God* in every thing. *Grace* will keep us from *slipping* in the creatures we enjoy, and *grace* will *elevate* us to *God* by these things. So likewise, if we be in *adversity* and *afflictions*, *grace* will quiet the soul under *afflictions*, *grace* will cause a man to rest in the *divine wisdom* and *will*; *grace* will cause a man to be content to be without the things another hath, and to *satisfie* himself in *God* without these things. This is that which made *Paul* to say, *He had learnt whatsoever state he was in, therewith to be content: he knew both how to be abased, and he knew how to abound:*  
every

*every where and in all things he was instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and suffer need: he could do all things through Christs strengthening of him, Phil. 4. 11, 12, 13.*

Divine grace made every condition sweet to him, thus will Divine grace make every condition sweet to us, if we have a *sufficiency* of grace to manage it aright. This should teach us to *covet* and *desire Divine grace* more than all other things. Truly, we need not be much concerned what our outward condition is, but our great concernment is to pray that we may have Divine grace to act us in every condition. If we can feel and experiment the *energy* and *operation* of Divine grace, that will carry us through every condition to the glory of God and our own comfort. We are *expecting times* of trouble, and I fear there is too great cause for us to expect them: but let us not be so much *solicitous* what may befall us, what difficulties we may be exercised withal, as we are *solicitous* to get Divine grace. Oh let us pray for a *sufficiency* of Divine grace, and then whatever our troubles, trials and calamities

mities may be, Divine grace will carry us through them all.

I shall add no more at present, but in another discourse I shall enlarge farther on this subject, to shew the *excellency* and *sweetness* of Divine grace.

*The end of the Ninth Sermon.*

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# S E R M O N X.

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2 Cor. 12. 9.

*And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*

Use 3.

**I** Come in the next place to an Use of *Admonition*. This should admonish us to take heed of *trusting in our selves*, or *presuming in our own strength*. If we need Divine grace to carry us through our conflicts and temptations, then we should take heed how we trust in our selves, Prov. 28. 26. *He that trusts in his own heart is a fool*. We are never in greater danger, than when we presume on our own strength most. *Peter* presumed on his own strength, but how soon was he foiled? We think we can do great things before we come to the *trial*, but when a temptation comes, then we quickly see our own weakness. It is a notable passage I have read of one of the



the *Antients*. It is a speech of *Ambrose*,  
*We often speak*, saith he, *of contemning*  
*this world*, and of having nothing to do  
 with it; but oh, that our affections were  
 as cautelous and wary to avoid it, as it  
 is easie for us to speak of avoiding it;  
 but that which is worse than this, the  
 bait and temptations of earthly de-  
 sires do oftentimes come in upon us,  
 and vanity overspreading the mind,  
 doth oftentimes occupy and take it up;  
 so that, that which we study to avoid,  
 we shall think of and revolve in our  
 minds; and, for a man to keep himself  
 from these incursions of temptation is  
 very hard and difficult, but to put them  
 off altogether it is impossible; our own  
 heart, our own thoughts are not in our  
 own power. How often doth sad ex-  
 perience evidence this to be true? Oh  
 that every one of us would dive into  
 our own hearts, will not our own ex-  
 perience tell us, that this is too true?  
 How often do our own thoughts, our  
 own passions, and affections hurry us  
 contrary to the deliberate purpose of  
 our will? We resolve it may be against  
 such and such a sin, and yet our own  
 thoughts and affections hurry us con-  
 trary to our own resolution. It is

*Non in potestate  
 nostra est cor  
 nostrum & no-  
 stre cogitati-  
 ones.* Ambros.

PROV. 28. 14.

good for us therefore not to be *high-minded* but fear, *blessed is the man that feareth always*. It is good for us to be *jealous* over our own hearts, always to suspect the weakness and infirmity of our own heart, and how prone we are to be overcome by temptation; for this is certain, we are never in greater danger to be overcome by a temptation, than when we suspect our own hearts least.

The second  
Use reassumed  
concerning  
the excellency  
of Divine  
grace.

We shall now reassume what we touched on more briefly before, and discourse a little more largely concerning the excellency of Divine grace, *My grace shall be sufficient for thee*. When the Lord would give the *best thing* to Paul that he could give him, he promiseth Divine grace to him, *My grace shall be sufficient for thee*. God doth not promise to take away the temptation from him, though Paul had prayed for that, *for this thing I besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me*. He besought God to take away the temptation from him, but God doth not hear him as to that, he doth not deliver him from the temptation, but he promiseth him something better, he promiseth him divine grace

to

## Several Considerations setting, &c.

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to carry him through his temptations, *My grace shall be sufficient for thee.* This shews us the *excellency of Divine grace.* My design is upon this occasion to *speak* something of the *excellency of grace.* This I am sensible is a *noble subject* in it self, and oh that I were able to speak of it according to the *worth and dignity* of it. I would fain speak of the excellency of Divine grace, that so I might call up my own soul and others to the *love and desire* of it. Here I shall propound, and set several considerations before us, to shew unto us the excellency of Divine grace.

The first Consideration is this, *Grace* *Consid. 1.* is such a gift that is of a *supernatural rank* and order; grace is such a thing as *transcends* and *excels* the whole sphere of nature, *grace is a certain gift of a supernatural order.* It was the *Divine* *Gratia est donum quoddam supernaturalem ordinis.* power that created and made all the creatures and constituted them in their beings, and it is the Divine providence that conserves the creatures in their beings, and in their operations. The whole course of nature is preserved by the *general influx* of *Divine providence.* It is a *contradiction* to suppose

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such a creature as is independent upon God the *first cause*, either as to its *being* or *operation*. But now although the whole course of nature be thus preserved by the general providence of God, yet grace is something that is *altioris ordinis*, as the *Schools* speak, of a *higher order*, something that doth *excedere ordinem naturæ*, exceed the order of nature. The creatures, by the general concurrence of Divine providence, may perform such and such *natural* actions for natural and convenient ends, but now grace *elevates* and *raiseth* the soul. Grace elevates the soul to *such actions* as are above nature, and to *those ends* that are *supernatural*. Grace is that *power* or *impress* that is left upon the soul, whereby the soul is carried forth to *supernatural* acts. Man as he is a *man*, as he is a *rational, intellectual creature*, may do *civil* and *political* actions; he may *buy* and *sell*, *traffick* and *converse*, make *wholesom laws* for the *good* and *benefit* of the community. But now there are some acts which are above the *sphere* of nature, as to *believe* God upon his word, to *love* God above all things, to *refer* a mans self and all his actions to  
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the glory of God as his last end; it is not from a principle of nature, but from a principle of Divine and supernatural grace, that a man is carried forth to such acts as these, so that grace carries a man above the sphere of nature.

2. To shew the excellency of Divine grace, consider that it is *Divine* grace that *enables* us to *resist* and *overcome* temptation. We should be ready to yield to the first *touch* and *impress* of a temptation had we not aid and assistance from Divine grace to resist it. *Free-will*, (as hath been hinted before) was *soon* overcome in the *first Adam*, by the first temptation that offered it self. But now Divine grace in the *second Adam* overcame all temptations: So that by comparing the two *Adams* together, the first and the second *Adam*, we may see the plain difference between the *virtue* or power of *free-will*, and the *virtue* and efficacy of Divine grace. *Free-will* in the *first Adam* was overcome by the first temptation, Divine grace in *Christ* the *second Adam* overcame all temptations. So that if we would be superior to all temptations, we must be sure to subject our selves to that grace that reigns in

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the second *Adam*. All those habitual gifts that the first *Adam* was endowed with, did not make him superior to one temptation; though *Adam* in innocency was possessed of the image of God, yet all those habitual gifts that were in the first *Adam* did not make him superior to one temptation. But yet that *actual grace* that is conveyed to us by Christ the second *Adam*, can set us up above all temptations. How little *taking* and *prevalent* are the strongest temptations when Divine grace is present? *Joseph* that was *solicited* by his *Mistress* from day to day, yea who had *violent hands* laid upon him to have forced him to yield to her, yet having the presence of Divine grace with him, overcame all these temptations. On the other hand if we have not the assistance of Divine grace, a *less* temptation will prevail. *David*, and *Sampson* were carried away by the bare aspect of a temptation; so *vast* a *difference* is there in us when we have the presence of Divine grace to *help* us, and when we have Divine grace *withdrawn* from us.

*Consol. 3.*

3. To shew us the excellency of Divine grace, consider, Divine grace is  
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that which doth *facilitate* the acts of obedience. Grace makes a man to act with *ease* and *facility* in the ways of God: and whereas without divine grace, every act of obedience would not only be hard but impossible, by the *presence* and *assistance* of Divine grace, the acts of obedience are made *facile* and *easy*. The *moral Philosophers* say of habits, that they do *facilitate* the *Power* to act, and render the *faculty* more apt and ready for action. He that hath acquired an *habit* of *temperance*, it is more *easy* for him to deny himself, and abstain from what is pleasing, and may be *tended* to him. Thus Divine grace *facilitates* the ways of God, it renders the duties of Religion more sweet and *easy*; *his commandments are not grievous*, 1 John 5. 3. The reason why holy duties seem *hard* and *difficult* to us, and the reason why we do not know how to *wade* through them, it is because we have no more experience of Divine grace. The *assistance* of Divine grace renders duties that seem very hard and difficult in themselves, to be very *facile* and *easy*, Psal. 119. 32. *I will run the way of thy commandments,*  
*when*

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when thou shalt enlarge my heart.*

*Consid. 4.* 4. To shew the excellency of *Divine grace*, consider, it is *actual grace* that quickens and excites *habitual grace*. Although we have the habits of grace in us ; yet we cannot exert and put forth these habits into act without *actual grace*, John 15. 5. *without me ye can do nothing.* Believers, that are in *Christ*, that have the habits of grace, cannot perform any act of obedience without *actual grace* and present influence from *Christ*. *Awake O North wind, come thou South, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out,* Cant. 4. 16. The Saints *graces* which are here compared to *spices*, they will not be in exercise and so yield a pleasant fragrant savour, unless there be fresh gales of the spirit to blow upon them. As we are beholding to *Divine grace* for planting the habits of grace in us first of all, so we are beholding to *Divine grace* for every new act of grace we put forth, *For it is God that works in us both to will and to do,* Phil. 2. 13.

*Consid. 5.* 5. It is by the help of *Divine grace*, that we *mortifie corruption*, and repress the *motions* of sin that are within us. Rom.



Rom. 8. 13. *If ye by the spirit mortifie the deeds of the flesh.* It is by the spirit that we must mortifie the deeds of the flesh. *Mortification* is a duty enjoyned upon us; we are commanded to *mortifie sin*, Col. 3. 5. *Mortifie your members which are upon the earth.* Oh, but though *Mortification* is a duty incumbent upon us, yet it is by the help of the Spirit and the assistance of Divine grace that we perform this duty. *Certain it is, saith Austin, that we do what we do, but it is as certain that it is God that enables us to do what we do, by affording most effectual strength to the will.* When corruption moves and stirs in us we should soon yield and consent, did not the Spirit of God give us *efficacious power* to resist. Our hearts are as *weak* and unstable as water, we are unable of our selves to resist the least motion of sin, but by Divine grace it is that we repress the *impetuous* and *violent* motions of sin. What is the reason that corruption at some times so soon riseth up, and gets head, and bears us down, and transports us in an uncomely manner; whereas at another time, we are able to check the first risings and motions

*Certum est, nos facere cum facimus, sed ille facit ut faciamus, præbendo vires efficacissimas voluntati.*  
August.

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tions of corruption? What is the reason of this difference, but that at one time we have the assistance of Divine grace; and God leaves us at another time to our selves, but for our humiliation.

*Consid. 6.* 6. It is *Divine grace* that doth recover and restore us after our *relapses* and falls into sin. As it is *Divine grace* that prevents and keeps us from falling, so far as we are kept from falling; so it is *Divine grace* that recovers us out of our falls.

1. It is *Divine grace* that keeps us from falling into sin, so far as we are kept, Jude 24. *To him that is able to keep you from falling.* We should fall foully, we should fall scandalously, did not *Divine grace* keep us. Oh, it becomes us to love *Divine grace* greatly. There is not the holiest person that could keep himself from falling into a gross and scandalous sin, did not *Divine grace* keep him. Some of the Saints have fallen into foul and scandalous sins, *David* did so, and others of the Saints have done so, and did not *Divine grace* keep us we should certainly do as they have done. Our Saviour bids us pray, *Lead us not into*  
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temptation, but deliver us from evil, and what is the meaning of those two Petitions, but that we might have grace to keep us from temptation, and grace to deliver us from evil. Now if we ought to pray to be delivered from evil, certainly we cannot keep our selves from the *evil of sin* without the power of Divine grace, therefore if we are kept from the *like falls*, wherewith others are overtaken, *let us not be high-minded but fear*, let us remember that it is by *grace* that we stand.

2. As Divine grace keeps us from falling so far as we are kept, so it is Divine grace that recovers us out of our falls. We should remain long enough under our falls did not Divine grace raise us up, and recover us out of them. It is conceived by Divines, that *David* did continue some time under his fall before he was recovered out of it. Look as when God leaves us to our selves first of all, our own hearts will hurry us to the greatest exorbitancies; so if God continue to leave us to our selves, we shall pine and languish under our distempers, our own corruptions will *tumultuate* more and more. For though corruption can-

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not *reign* in a godly man as it doth in a wicked man, (it is inconsistent with grace for sin to reign in any that have grace) yet it may *rage* in him for a time, and *Luther* hath a saying to this purpose, That sin may *rage* in a godly man for a time more than in a wicked man. Oh, but how very sad and bitter is it where God permits and suffers corruption thus to tumultuate and rage in us? Truly till Divine grace do recover us, corruption will have its raging fits. It is Divine grace that doth recover us. He restoreth my soul, saith *David*. Oh, until Divine grace do restore us, it will be long enough till we restore our selves, nay we shall never be restored. Not that we are to sit still, but the more we find corruption to rage, the more ought we to groan to Heaven, and cry out so much the louder for Divine grace: but this is certain, till Divine grace recover us, we shall never be recovered. When *Peter* was left to himself, left by Divine grace, he denied his Master the first, second and third time, and there was no sign of his recovery, till *Christ* gave him a look with his eye. It must be some powerful touch of Divine  
grace

grace that must recover us when we are fallen by corruption and temptation.

7. It is Divine grace that quickens, *Consid. 7.*  
*enlivens* and raises the affections after they have been flat and dead. Holy men, persons that have walked with God, do often complain of *damps* and *deadnesses* that they feel coming upon themselves. It is not so with them as sometimes it hath been with them. They do not feel that *fervency* in prayer, that *liveliness* in holy duties, that *activity* for God, those meltings in their *affections* as sometimes they have found. Oftentimes there is great listlessness to holy duties, much coldness and deadness in their hearts, much streightness in their affections in their performance of holy duties. *David* prays in *Psal. 119.* *Uphold me that I may live*, that was an argument that he was sensible that his *spiritual life* was greatly decayed, that he was grown dead, and heavy, and lumpish in the ways of God; that he had lost that quickness and liveliness of his affections that once he had. Thus is it with others of the people of God, they find deadness, coldness, lumpishness too often coming upon them, and the *cause* of this spiritual deadness is  
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commonly one of these things, either, 1. *Unthankfulness* for former quicknings, or else, 2. Presumption of our selves, and our own strength, and thinking that we had *quickning* and *inlargement* at command. Or else, 3. Neglect of some of the means of grace publick or private. Or else, 4. Some *inordinate affection* springing up in the soul. Or else, 5. Some secret indulgence to some sin that grieves the Spirit, and causeth the Spirit to withdraw from us. These are ordinarily the causes of those *deadnesses* that fall upon the Saints. Now when the Saints fall under these deadnesses, it is Divine grace must quicken them; they cannot raise themselves from under these deadnesses, they cannot get from under them. We may think to *rise* and *shake* our selves, and do as at other times; but believe it, if the Spirit of God be departed from us, as from *Sampson*, we shall fall flat to the ground: as a man that is *wounded*, may essay to rise up and to walk, but presently falls down to the earth again. But now Divine grace, that puts new life and strength into the soul; a fresh gale of the Spirit elevates and raises a dead soul. Look as a *ship* when it is  
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becalmed, and there is no *wind* stirring; can make no way, but then a *fresh gale comes*, and then it sails amain. So when a soul hath received a *fresh gale* of *Divine grace*, then it begins to move afresh, then it can act afresh, whereas before it was becalmed and found little stirring, little motion Godward. *Draw me*, saith the Church, and then *we will run after thee*, Cant. 1. 4.

8. The excellency of divine grace *Consid. 8.* appears in this, that it *elevates* a man *above the world*. What is it that makes some of the Saints to *contemn* the world when others do so much admire it? it is the power of Divine grace that *elevates* and *raiseth* their hearts above the world. It is grace that makes the world seem a little thing. Grace shews a man something higher than the world, and causeth a man to look down upon the world with a holy disdain and *contempt*, as a thing that is much beneath him, Gal. 6. 14. *I am crucified to the world*, saith the Apostle, *and we look not to the things that are seen*, 2 Cor. 4. 18. Grace carries up the soul above *temporal things*. Grace causeth a man to look upon the things of this world as *mean* and of short continuance.

tinuance. Other men admire the world and pursue it as their *chief* good ; but now a man that is acted by Divine grace doth not so, he hath no such *admiring thoughts* of it, he doth not apprehend so *much* good, so much *excellency* in it, but his heart is carried out to something higher.

*Consid. 9.* 9. Grace, it enables a man to *bear afflictions*, grace *quiets* the soul under affliction, and strengthens it to bear up with patience under it, 1 Col. 7. *Strengthened unto all patience.* It is *Divine grace* that strengthens us to bear afflictions with patience, we should *sink* and *succumb*, and *despond*, did not Divine grace strengthen us to bear up under affliction, Isa. 40. last. *He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.* Truly, a little affliction will sink us if Divine grace do not help us, whereas on the other hand, a great affliction will not be able to bear us down, if Divine grace do but support us. If a man have a great presence and assistance of Divine grace, it will help him to bear a long course, and tract, and series of affliction. If one affliction come upon the neck of another, yet if he have

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Divine grace continued to him, Divine grace will enable him to bear all. *Job* had one affliction come upon the neck of another, and yet he saith, *The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.* Indeed when he was left to himself, then he *curst the day of his birth*, but as long as *Divine grace* was with him he bare one affliction after another. When the Lord leaves us to our selves, then we shall find secret murmurings and repinings in our hearts against the providence of God; and God leaves us sometimes on purpose to our selves to shew us what is in our own hearts. If Divine grace be withdrawn, then we have experience how apt our hearts are to repine, and to be impatient under affliction; but when Divine grace is present with us, then we can lie down sweetly under the hand of God and acquiesce in his wisdom and will, believing that every thing that comes upon us is best for us, as he said, *I was dumb and opened not my mouth, because thou dist it.*

10. I shall only mention one particular more at the present, although there is more to be spoken concerning this

argument of Divine grace: *Divine grace* will teach us to *think honourably* of all the works and providences of God, of all that he doth abroad in the world, *The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works*, Psal. 145. 17. A man that is acted by *carnal* reason and *fleshly* wisdom, is offended and displeased with the works of God that do not suit with his reason, and agree with his apprehension. But now Divine grace teaches us to adore those providences of God that we cannot comprehend, and attain to the reason of, *How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out*, Rom. 11. 33. *Divine grace* will teach a man to allow that *prerogative* to God, as to know how to carry things beyond the *line of humane understanding*. Grace will teach a man to allow God that wisdom, as to be able to see the reason of things that we do not see the reason of, Job 12. 23. *He increaseth the nations and destroyeth them, he enlargeth the nations and streightneth them again*. Grace will teach us to adore the providence of God in all these things. God hath cast us upon an age of wonders, he is doing strange and

and wonderful things in the earth, and what is our duty under all these things, these strange and wonderful actings of providence? Truly,

1. To justify God, not to accuse him of unrighteousness in any of his dispensations, but to allow him that sovereign wisdom, that he knows the reason of those providences we do not see a reason of.

2. We ought to learn more effectually the vanity of the world and all earthly things.

3. We ought to learn this by the great *changes* and *revolutions* that come upon the earth to fix our heart upon things that are *firm* and *stable*, and cannot be shaken, Heb. 12. 28. *We receiving a Kingdom that cannot be moved.* We see by experience that the *states* and *nations* of this world may be *shaken*, O but there is a Kingdom that cannot be shaken. *We receiving* (saith the Apostle) *a Kingdom which cannot be moved*, and what is that Kingdom that cannot be shaken? Truly the Kingdom of Christ in the hearts of men. The *visible* Kingdom of Christ may meet with *visible stops* and *interruptions*, that is to say, the Gospel that was preached in some

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places may be removed and taken from those places where it was preached, the Ordinances may be removed from one place and carried to another, this I call the visible Kingdom of Christ, this I say may meet with visible stops and interruptions, yet this we may say concerning this *visible Kingdom of Christ*, that look what the visible Kingdom of Christ loseth in one time and in one place, it shall certainly gain at another time and in another place. But though the visible Kingdom of Christ may meet with some stops and interruptions, yet the spiritual Kingdom of Christ that is set up in the souls of men abides constant in the midst of all outward shakings. *The Kingdom of God*, saith our Saviour, *is within you*. O there is a Kingdom within! and what doth that Kingdom consist of? It consists in *righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost*. This Kingdom abides in the midst of all changes in the world. *Pardon* of sin is still the same, the *love* and *favour* of God is still the same, *Salvation* is still the same and we may live in the hope and comfort of these things in the midst of all the changes, vicissitudes and revolutions

tions that come upon the world. And if we place our happiness in any thing besides what is in these things, our happiness is liable to be shaken. There is nothing in this world we can be certain of, the *greatest*, *highest* and *best* things of this world are subject to change. But if we know that our sins are pardoned, if we know that we have an interest in the love and favour of God, if we know that our souls shall be saved at last, here we have something that is *certain* to quiet and comfort us. And let me be bold to say, it will never be well with us till we are brought to this, to resolve all our happiness into the salvation of our souls at last, I say till we do this we shall never be at rest, 1 Pet. 1. 10. *Receiving the end of your hope, the Salvation of your soul.* Until the thoughts of salvation *preponderate* the sufferings of this life, till we are able in some measure to relieve our selves with this *one thought*, whatever my afflictions are, I hope I shall be saved at last, salvation is mine and I hope I shall live with God for ever, it will never be well with us, for afflictions and trials will come whether we expect them yea or

no, and if one affliction be blown over we must expect another. When therefore afflictions and trials come upon us, if we have nothing to stay, balance and quiet the heart, we must needs sink under them. Now nothing will bear up our hearts but the hope of salvation; let us therefore live upon the hope of Salvation; there is nothing like to the solid assurance and hope of salvation in the next life, that will bear us up under the various changes of this life. Oh let us be making sure of salvation, that will be our greatest comfort and support amidst all the changes we may meet with here beneath.

*The end of the Tenth Sermon.*

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# SERMON XI.

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2 Cor. 12. 9.

*And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*

**T**Here are several other particulars that discover to us the *excellency of Divine grace*, and you must carry this all along with you, that I am not now speaking of that which *Divines* call *habitual grace*, but I am speaking of the excellency of the *influence of Divine grace*, or that which is commonly called *actual grace*. Now I shall propound several things more concerning the *excellency of grace*, over and above what I have already spoken of.

The 1. Particular is this, It is by the help of *Divine grace* that we come to apprehend the reality, the *nature*, the *beauty* and *excellency* of spiritual things.

1. It is *grace* that helps us to apprehend

prehend the *reality of spiritual things*. Carnal men that are *destitute of Divine grace*, hear of the *things of God*, but they are only *general notions*, swimming in their brain. Carnal men may hear of Heaven, and Hell, they may hear of the *preciousness of the soul*, they may hear of the *excellency of Christ*, and the like : but they are not acquainted with the reality of these things, they have indeed some general confused notions of these things, but these things are not represented to the mind of carnal men as real things. Now here is one discovery of the *excellency of Divine grace*. Divine grace discovers to the soul the *reality of spiritual things*, it causeth a man to apprehend what is spoken concerning God to be real, it causeth a man to apprehend that *Heaven* and the *glory of it* is a *real thing*, and that the excellency of Christ is a *real thing*, Heb. 11. 1. *Faith is the evidence of things not seen*. Faith causeth things that have a *real being* in themselves, to have a *real being* and *existence* in a mans apprehension. Faith makes things to be clear, and plain, and evident to the soul. Those things that are dark, obscure  
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and uncertain to carnal men, that have no grace, these things appear with clearness and evidence to a man that hath Divine grace. It is said of the ancient Saints, that, *They were perswaded of the promises*, Heb. 11. 13. That is, they were fully perswaded of the *verity, truth, and certainty* of the promises. Other men have only some *fluctuating, wavering, uncertain* thoughts of spiritual things, but they are not possessed with the truth and reality of them. It is *Divine grace* only that causeth spiritual things to appear to be *real* to the mind and apprehension of a man.

2. It is *Divine grace* that causeth a man to apprehend the *nature* of spiritual things. Other men hear of God, and Christ, and the mysteries of the Gospel, but it is little they apprehend of the nature of these things, 1 Cor. 2. 14. *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* A man that hath not grace doth not know, neither can he know spiritual things. There must be a *spiritual light* let into the mind,

to cause a man to apprehend the nature of spiritual things, otherwise he cannot understand them, because as the *Apostle* saith, *they are spiritually discerned*. Now men that have no grace, they are destitute of this *light*, whereby they should apprehend *spiritual things*. But now Divine grace, that gives a *spiritual apprehension* of spiritual things. *To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom*, Matth. 13. 11. It is a spicial gift of God, to be acquainted with the nature of spiritual things, for these things are *riddles* to other men. A carnal man knows the *outside* of things, but he is not led into the inside of truth; as the *Apostle* speaks concerning the Law, Heb. 10. 1. *That the Law had a shadow of things to come, but it had not the very image of the things themselves*. So we may say a carnal man, a man that is not *illuminated* by the *light* of Divine grace, such a man may have a *shadow* of the knowledge of things in his mind, he may have the *form* of knowledge in his mind, but he hath not the *very image* and *substance* of things in his mind. But now Divine grace makes spiritual things appear in some measure

measure as they are. By the help of Divine grace we are helped to see spiritual things *as they are*, hence is that of the *Apostle*, *you received it not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the word of God*, 1 Thes. 2. 13. Other men receive the word, as the word of men; O but grace makes a man to receive the word *as the word of God*, it discovers to him the nature of the word, that it comes from God, and hath a Divine stamp and impress upon it.

3. Grace causeth a man to apprehend the *excellency* of spiritual things. As Divine grace helps a man to understand the *reality* and *nature* of *spiritual things*, so it causeth a man to apprehend the *excellency* of spiritual things, 1 Cor. 2. 6. *we speak wisdom among them that are perfect*. By *perfect* here the *Apostle* doth not understand such as are *simply* and *absolutely* perfect, for there are none such in this world: But he means *comparatively* perfect, *we speak wisdom among them that are perfect*, that is, such as are *perfect* in comparison of other men, *we speak wisdom to them that are perfect*, that is, unto *enlightened souls*. We speak wisdom to them that are endowed with  
*grace*

*grace* and the Spirit of God. I suppose the Apostle by *perfect* here understands *illuminated* souls, such as are illuminated by grace and the Spirit of God. Now, saith the Apostle, *we speak wisdom to them*. The Gospel and the *Mysteries* of it, is the greatest and highest wisdom to illuminated souls, to such as are enlightned by the Spirit of God; however they may appear *foolishness* to other men who are not enlightned, yet there is no such wisdom to an enlightned soul, as there is in the *mysteries* of Christ. The *conjunction* of the *two natures* in the *person* of Christ, and the *mysterie* of Divine grace in carrying on the work of our Salvation by Christ in both his natures, this is the greatest wisdom to an enlightned soul. *we speak wisdom to them that are perfect*, this is the wisdom the Apostle speaks of, *viz.* The *mysterie* of Christ, the *mysterie* of our salvation carried on by Christ, this is the highest wisdom to an enlightned soul. Divine grace makes a man to see the excellency of spiritual things. An *enlightned* soul seeth the worth of *pardon* of sin, the worth of Gods favour, the *beauty* of *holiness*, the *preciousness* of

of the *promises*; whereas other men see no great excellency in these things. *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entred into the heart of man, to conceive the things that God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them to us by the spirit, 1 Cor. 2. 9, 10.* The Spirit of God reveals the *excellency* of those things to the children of God, that other men see no excellency in.

2. The second particular to discover the excellency of Divine grace is this, It is *Divine* grace that *elevates the soul to God*. Naturally we stick in these lower and inferior things. Now this is the nature of grace, that it doth advance the reasonable creature above the condition and *sphere* of nature, unto the participation of the *Divine* good. Nature sticks in *natural* good, nature rests in *natural things*, but grace carries up the soul to a *supernatural* good, grace carries up the soul above all created things unto God himself. This is a great thing that doth commend Divine grace to us, that it is grace only that elevates the soul above the creature unto God. Were it not for Divine grace, we should

*Tab't creaturam rationalem supra conditionem nature ad participationem Boni Divini.*

should always stick in the creature. It is grace that elevates and raiseth the soul above the creature unto God. Without Divine grace we can rise no *higher* than the creature. Every natural man *seeks* his happiness in the creature, *sticks* there, and riseth no higher. But this is the excellency of grace, that it elevates and advanceth the soul to God himself, *To thee O Lord do I lift up my soul*, Psal. 25. 1. Grace raiseth up the soul above *created things* unto God. By the power of Divine grace we are elevated to that *life* which is above nature. Grace carries us above the *sphere* of *nature*. By the power of Divine grace it is that we come to *know God*, to love him, to *converse* with him, and this is *life eternal to know the only true God*. We may *eat*, and *drink*, and *walk* up and down in the world, but this is not *eternal life*, these are the actions of a *natural* life which must have an end: Also we may *buy*, and *sell*, and *commerce* in the world, but these are the actions of a *civil* life, and these things must have an end, they must end with this world. But to know God, to love him, to *seek* his glory, these are the actions of a  
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John 17. 3:

spiritual life, and these are the *beginnings* of eternal life. So that *grace*, it carries a man above the *whole sphere* of nature. Without grace you can only do as other men do, you may perform the actions of a natural life, those things that concern this world, but you cannot do those things that concern the spiritual life. It is grace only that elevates and raiseth up the soul to God.

3. To shew the excellency of *Divine grace*, consider, There is *infinite sweetness* in *Divine grace*. O the *suavity*, the *unutterable sweetness* that is in *Divine grace*! I dare appeal to the experience of holy souls, whether ever they found any thing so *sweet* to them in this world as *Divine grace*, and the actings of it in their souls. Nothing so sweet as *Divine grace*. And here I shall set before you in some particulars the sweetness of *Divine grace*.

1. Consider, That *Divine grace* carrying up the soul to God, as it doth, it carries it up to the *highest object*. *Grace* causeth the soul to *transcend* and go beyond the sphere of all created things and to fix in God alone. Now when the soul is brought to God,

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there is not a *higher* or more superior object for the soul to ascend unto. Now when the soul by the power of Divine grace is brought to him who is the *highest perfection*, beyond whom there is not a *higher perfection*; this must needs cause *infinite sweetness*, for the soul is still *climbing* up from one thing to another, it is *ascending* higher and higher, it would fain be at the top of all good. I say it is in the nature of our souls to aim at this. But now when the soul hath found out the *highest perfection*, him that is *perfection* it self, this must needs be matter of infinite sweetness to it; when the soul hath found out *that good*, than whom there is no higher, greater or better, but is absolutely perfect and compleat, certainly that must needs afford the greatest *sweetness* and *contentment* to it.

Amongst the *several* ends men aim at, and the *several* goods that they pursue, there is always one *last* end, one *chief good*, and when they acquire the *last* end, and obtain the chief good, that is their greatest delight. Now God is the *last* end, the *chief* good, nothing is *beyond* him, nothing may be *compared* with him. Now Divine  
grace



grace elevating the soul to God, must needs fill it with infinite sweetness.

2. The sweetness of Divine grace appears in this; *grace*, in carrying forth the soul to God, carries it forth to the most *suitable* and *convenient* object. *Delight* ariseth from *suitableness* and *conveniency*. Now grace elevating the soul to God, elevates it to the most *suitable* object. The soul being of a *spiritual nature*, a *spiritual good* is most *suitable* to it; the soul being *immortal*, an *eternal good* is most *suitable* to it; the soul being so *vast* capacity as that it can take in more than all created things come to, an *infinite* and an *uncreated* good is most *suitable* to it. Now Divine grace is that which elevates the soul to God who is a *spiritual*, *eternal*, *infinite* good; and this is the most *suitable* and *convenient* object for the soul, and therefore when the soul by *Divine* grace is *carried* up to *God*, it must needs fill it with the greatest sweetness, because no object so *suitable* and *convenient* to the soul, as *God*.

3. Another thing, to shew the sweetness of Divine grace is this, That Divine grace raiseth the soul to an holy

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kind of *amplitude* and *greatness*. I remember *Gibens* observes that the true *liberty* of the will it doth consist in *divina quadam amplitudine*, in a *divine* kind of *amplitude* or *greatness* of soul, that is to say, when the soul is carried up above the sphere of created things to love God and to adhere to him as the chief good, this is the true liberty of the will as he states it. Now it is *Divine grace* that raiseth the soul to this *amplitude* and *holy greatness*. Grace is that which raiseth the soul up to God, and when the soul by the power of *Divine grace* is raised up unto God, then it hath a *large field* to expatiate it self, and walk in. The more the soul is acted by *Divine grace*, the more *liberty* and *inlargement* doth it find in it self, Pſal. 111. 45. *I will walk at liberty, for I seek thy precepts.* As much as if he should say, I find nothing that gives that *liberty* and *inlargement* to my soul like to the exercise of *grace*, like to holy walking. When *Divine grace* raiseth the soul to walk with God in a way of *obedience*, this is that gives the greatest liberty and *inlargement* to the soul. If we observe it, we shall find it true, *Earthly*

ly things, when the soul is let out to them in an inordinate way, do but *confine* and *narrow* the soul, the soul is as it were *pent up* in a narrow place, when it is confined to these things. But when grace raiseth the soul to God, then the soul finds it self at liberty, the soul never *enjoys* it self so much as when it loves *God* most, when it adheres to God most, when it *delights* in him most. Here the soul finds Sea-room enough, when the soul adheres to God, solaces it self in God, then it is in a vast *Ocean* of good. But when the soul adheres to the creature, it is kept within narrow bounds and limits. The creature is but a *little*, *narrow*, *private*, *particular* good, indeed it is not worth the name of good if it be considered abstract from God and its relation to him. But now God is the *universal* good, and by grace it is we are elevated to God the *universal* good. There is an *innate propension* in the soul, carrying it out (if I may so say) to an *infinite* good. Indeed this is the unhappiness of men by the *fall*, they have lost the knowledge of the *true* good. Man by the fall hath lost the knowledge of God,

and love to him, and man having lost the *Creator*, and being sunk into the creature, there we stick, till Divine grace elevate us, and take us out of the creature, and bring us back to God again. But though it be thus with man by the fall, that he hath lost the *knowledge* of God (the only *true good*, the *chief good*, the *infinite good*) and *love* to him, yet there is a *general inclination* in the soul (if I may so speak) towards the chief good, that is to say, the soul of man would fain be at the *highest good* if it knew how to come at it, and this is intrinsecal to the nature of the soul, and the *Radix* of liberty lies in it, that the soul would fain come up to the chief good, if it knew how. Now these *lower* and *particular* goods detain and keep back the soul from God the *chief good*, whilst the soul is in a *tendency* towards good (as it always is and cannot but be, the reasonable soul is always in a tendency towards some good or other). It is hindered from ascending unto God the chief good, by adhering to these *lower* and *inferior* goods, and thus it is *narrowed* and *confined*; whereas if it could reach to God, there it would find *liberty*

erty and *inlargement* by seeing an infinite good before it. Now herein doth the excellency of Divine grace appear, in that it causeth the soul to extend it self and reach forth it self unto God the *infinite good*; and whilst the soul is thus carried forth in a *direct line* of affection towards God the *infinite good*, then it finds the greatest *liberty* and *inlargement in it self*. This is another that speaks the sweetness of Divine grace, that it fills the soul with an holy amplitude or greatness, and delivers it from confinement.

4. The sweetness of Divine grace appears in this, grace causeth the soul to act *regularly*, and in the most *perfect manner*. The more *regular* and *perfect* the *operations* of the soul are, the more *true peace*. You will find it in *experience*, that all the troubles and disturbance of the soul comes from the *oblique* and *irregular motions* of the soul; the more regularly your souls move and act, the more peace, Psal. 119. 165. *Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them. The law of God is nothing but the expression or declaration of his will, now the will of God is the rule of goodness.*

Now Divine grace is that which elevates the soul to act most *regularly*, and *conformably* to the Divine will, which is the rule of goodness, and *perfection*, and the greater *harmony* there is between our will and the *Divine will*, the more true peace. Look as it is with the body, when all the parts of the body are kept in their proper place; when none of the limbs are dislocated, and disjoynted, when the humours are kept in a due temperament, when the senses are kept quick and lively, and fit to discharge their office, and to perform their operations, the body is then in the most perfect health, and enjoys it self most. So it is here, when all things are in order in the soul, when the soul acts most regularly and conformably to the Divine will, then doth the soul enjoy it self most. The *perfection* of every thing, it is to be in the place God hath set it in. Now the perfection of man who is a *reasonable creature*, it is to be in a state of subjection to God. Man as he is a reasonable creature being created *under a law*, mans perfection is to be subject to the *Divine law*, and the greater his conformity is to that Law, the

the greater is his perfection, and the reason is, as was laid, because man by observing the Divine law, keeps in the place God hath set him in. Man as he is a creature is in a state of subjection, and his perfection is to be subject to his Creator, and the more he is so, the more he doth attain the end of his creation, and so by consequence the more *true peace* doth he enjoy.

5. The sweetness of Divine grace appears in this, that Divine grace causeth a man to *delight in the ways of God*, *Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his commandments.* So much grace, so much delight in the ways of God. A man may walk in the ways of God, yet not find so much delight in them at first. But so much as a man hath of Divine grace, the more shall he delight in the ways of God; and the more a man can delight in Gods ways, the greater is the *measure* of his grace. Now it is Divine grace that causeth a man to delight in the ways of God: now delight causeth sweetness; so much as we can delight in the ways of God, to much sweetness shall we find in them: and the reason why we find no more sweet-

sweetness in the ways of God, is because we delight no more in them.

6. The *sweetness* of Divine grace appears in this, that the *presence* of Divine grace sweetens the want of other comforts. *A good man, saith Solomon, is satisfied from himself. A holy man* that wants other comforts, so far as he is acted by *Divine* grace, finds a great deal of *sweetness* in the *exercise* of grace it self; and the reason why he finds no more *sweetness*, is because he hath no more grace. Nothing is more *sweet* to an *holy* soul, than to love God, and be beloved of him, *In the keeping of his commandments there is great reward, Psa. 19. 11.* not only *after* the *keeping* of them, but *in* the *keeping* of them there is *great* reward. So much as *Divine* grace acts us, we shall be *satisfied* in God and *with* God himself, when God denies us other things. Not but that we may lawfully *desire* and *use* other things, so far as God allows and gives us these things. But when God denies us these things, it is the property of Divine grace to incline the soul to take up with God, and to satisfy it self with God, when God withholds these things from



from us, as I may shew more hereafter.

7. The *sweetness* of Divine grace appears in this, that grace causeth a man to *live* upon God himself in the *midst* of other comforts. As it is the nature of Divine grace to cause a man to *retire* to God, and *cleave* to him when he wants other things; so it is grace that causeth the soul to *live* upon God himself in the midst of other comforts. When a man is *surround- ed* with all other comforts, grace causeth the soul to turn it self to God and say, *thou art my happiness, thou shalt be my happiness, and not these things*, this is the proper language of grace. I take it for a certain truth, that it is the property of grace to suffer the soul to *rest* in nothing but in God himself. Grace causeth a man to pass through all his other comforts, and enjoyments, unto God, and say, *Thou art the true rest, the life and solace of my soul. Nothing is, nothing can be, nothing shall be that to my soul which thou art.* It is *Divine* grace that thus *elevateth* the soul to God. *Carnal men* that are not *acted by Divine* grace, *stick* and *rest* in the *outward* things themselves that they enjoy. It is *Divine* grace only

ly that causeth a man to live upon God in the midst of other things, and to *solace* himself in him over and above all the other comforts that he doth enjoy, *Thou art my portion*, saith my soul, Lam. 3. 24. And it is a great Scripture, Psal. 142. 5. *Thou art my refuge, and my portion in the land of the living*. Why in the land of the living? What is the meaning of that, that the Lord is his portion *in the land of the living*? The *land of the living*, is this *present* world, so it is taken in several Scriptures, Hezekiah said, *He should not see the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living*. So it is said of Christ, *That he was cut off from the land of the living*; so again, *I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living*: so that the land of the *living*, is taken for *this world*. Now, saith David, *Thou art my refuge, and my portion in the land of the living*, God was not only to be his *portion* in the *other world*, in the *land of eternity*, if we may so call it, but he was to be his portion in this world, when he should be surrounded with all the comforts the earth could afford him. It is true, David was now in

Isa. 38. 11.

Isa. 53. 8.

Psal. 27. 13.

in an afflicted condition, he was in the *cave*, as the Title of the Psalm shews, yet he had a *promise* of the *Kingdom*. Now God was not only his *refuge* in his present distress, but he was resolved that God should be his *portion in the land of the living*; if ever he were brought to the Kingdom that was promised to him, yet God should be all his portion then. It is the property of *grace* to make a man account upon God more than he doth upon all the good things and comforts that he doth enjoy. When he hath all these things about him, yet he accounts *upon God*, and *what God is to him*, above all these things.

8. *Lastly*, To shew us the *sweetness* of Divine grace, consider, It is always *well* with the soul when it is acted by Divine grace, and the soul is always full of *trouble, confusion and perplexity*, when it is *deserted* by Divine grace.

1. It is always *well* with the soul when it is *acted* by Divine grace. There is an *ineffable* suavity that accompanies Divine grace; the soul feels the most perfect *ease, quiet, serenity, satisfaction*, so far as it is acted by Divine grace. Observe your own *experience* and you shall

shall find it true, so far as your hearts are acted by Divine grace, you will find an inward *rest, quiet, and serenity* of mind. This made *Austin* say, that *Divine* grace consisted in a *spiritual suavity*. Truly this *spiritual suavity* is *inseparable from Divine grace*; so far as we are acted by Divine grace, we shall find inutterable *sweetness* in it. The *hardest* things in Religion are made sweet by Divine grace. The *tears* of grace are sweet, and that which may seem a *paradox* is certainly true. *Godly sorrow* is more *sweet* to a man that is acted by Divine grace, than all the *pleasures of sin* are to a carnal man. *Patience* in bearing the *cross*, is *sweet*, for though *afflictions themselves* are bitter, yet the *grace of patience* by which we bear afflictions, this is most sweet. Yea *acts of self-denial* are sweet, for though it be *bitter* to nature to have our *own wills cross*, yet when Divine grace helps us to conquer *our wills*, out of love to God, nothing is more sweet. How sweet is *grace* that sweetens the *hardest* things? The *hardest things* in Religion are made sweet by Divine grace, O there is inutterable sweetness in Divine grace!

grace! Could we always *will* and *desire* as grace would teach us to *will* and *desire*, we should not complain of so many troubles as we do, for our troubles arise from hence, because we do not act, as grace would teach us to act.

2. As it is *always well* with the soul when it is acted by Divine grace, so it is *always ill with the soul*, when it is deserted in point of grace. When a man is left to himself, when there is nothing but nature or corruption that acts in him, then there is nothing but *trouble* and *disquietment*, the soul is then in a tumult, all things are in a hurry. It is Divine grace that carries the soul to its *centre*, and when the soul is not acted towards God by Divine grace, it is like a thing off from its centre, out of its place, and then the soul must needs be in a confusion. How *excellent* and *sweet* then must Divine grace be, that makes all things well with the soul whilst it is acted by it, and all things *ill* with it when deserted by it. How do these things then call upon us to love and prize Divine grace? O it is one of the greatest attainments in Christianity, to see the  
*need*

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*need of Divine grace , and to long to be acted by Divine grace ; and as we do come to greater attainments in Christianity, the more we shall see the need of Divine grace, and the more we shall desire to be acted by Divine grace.*

*The end of the Eleventh Sermon.*

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SERMON

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# SERMON XII.

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2 Cor. 12. 9.

*And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*

**I** Come now to some other particulars to shew us the excellency of Divine grace. The last consideration mentioned to set forth the excellency of grace, was taken from the *sweetness* that is in Divine grace, and that was the *third particular*; we now come to a *fourth*.

4. The *Excellency of Divine grace* appears in this, That Divine grace, it is some kind of *participation* of God himself. Grace is that which causeth us in a measure to *participate* of the *Divine Life*, and of the *Divine perfection*. Hence is that expression of the Apostle *Peter*, 2 Pet. 1. 4. *That we are made partakers of the Divine nature*. By the help of Divine grace

The fourth Particular to shew the excellency of Divine grace.

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we are brought to the nearest similitude to the *Divine Life*. For wherein doth the will of God consist? It is the perfection of God to *will himself* as the *last end*, and to *will all things relating to the creature in the most holy manner*. This is the Divine perfection. Now by Divine grace it is that we are able to will God as our *last end*, and to *will all other things regularly and conformably to the Divine will*. It is the happiness of Heaven that we shall be *like to God*, 1 John 3. 2. We shall be *like him*, that is, we shall be *holy* as he is *holy*, *happy* as he is *happy*, according to the capacity of the creature. Now by grace we are assimilated to God here on earth. None so like to God here on earth as he that is most acted by Divine grace.

*Partic. 5.* 5. Another thing wherein the excellency of Divine grace appears is this, Divine grace is that which causeth a man to deny his own *wisdom*, his own *will*, his own *inclinations* and *affections*, and to refer himself wholly to the Divine *wisdom* and *will*, and to acquiesce therein. Thus did the power of Divine grace exert it self, and shew it self forth in our Saviour, and if we would



would look for grace, and see where grace is to be found in perfection, we must look to Christ, for he is the highest pattern of grace, in him grace acted it self in perfection. The power of Divine grace in the heart of our Saviour shewed it self in this, to make him deny his *own will* and acquiesce in the *Divine will*, Matth. 26. 37, 39. *Father if it be possible let this cup pass from me: Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.* Here we see our Saviour denies his *own will*, and refers himself to the fathers will; the *natural desire* and *inclination* of the humane will in our Saviour was to be kept from suffering. But now herein did the power of Divine grace appear in the heart of our Saviour, that he denied his own will and referred himself to his Fathers will, *Not as I will, but as thou wilt.* As much as if he had said, not that which I desire, not that which nature would think best, but that which thou in thy infinite wisdom thinkest best, and which thy will determines. Much of the *power* and *efficacy* of Divine grace appears in this, in helping a man to conquer his own *private will*, his *natural desires* and *Inclinations*.

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When the *Impetus* and *bent* of nature lies this way, nature is carryed with a *strong current* to such a thing, then comes the power of Divine grace and helps a man to deny this strong bent and inclination of nature, and carries him a quite contrary way, this shews the efficacy of Divine grace. And they that do not know what this means, know little of the power of grace. But those that have felt the power of the grace of God upon their hearts, they know what these things mean.

*Partic. 6.* 6. The Excellency of Divine grace appears in this, that it will cause a man to be *satisfied in God*, and *with God*, *without other things*. I have shewed formerly how grace causeth a man to live upon God *in the midst* of other things. Now I must shew how grace will cause a man to be satisfied with God when he *denies* him other things. So much as a man is acted by Divine grace, he will *adhere to God*, *live upon God* and be *satisfied with God* when he wants other things. Not that a Godly man *despise*th and refuseth the gifts of God which he bestows upon him; he knows he may lawfully desire and use the gifts of God in their proper places.

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But when God denies those comforts to him that others have, or he himself hath a mind to, so far as a man is acted by Divine grace, he will retire to God himself and adhere to him, accounting God to be his happiness when he hath nothing else, *Psal. 16. 5, 6. The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.* It is as much as if he had said, though I have nothing left but God, yet I have enough in him, I am satisfied in him, *God is our riches* Dis itie nostra, Deus noster. Aug. said that *holy man*. O let us pray for more Divine grace, and then we shall have more experience of this frame.

7. The Excellency of Divine grace *Partic. 7.* appears in this, that it *elevates* the soul to the *desire of the Heavenly Country*. It is by the power of Divine grace that we come to *breath* much after the *future life*. It is said of the *antient Saints*, *Now they desire a better country, that is an Heavenly*, *Heb. 11. 16.* It was *grace* that elevated them unto this, for it is proper to nature to stick in present things. The natural desires and affections that are in men

cause them to desire to live always here on earth. They *know* not another life, are not *acquainted* with it, and therefore they do not *desire* it. It is Divine grace only that doth discover to men another life, and causeth them to *suspire* and *breath* after that life, 2 Cor. 5. 8. *we are confident, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.* Paul knew there was *another life*, a more *excellent life* after this, he knew he should be *present with the Lord*, and *live with him*, and this made him *suspire* and *breathe* after this life. It is only the grace of God can make a man breathe after the future life, for the generality of men that are not acted by Divine grace, stick in these things, and would always live here on earth.

*Partic. 8.* 8. The Excellency of *Divine* grace appears in this, that it causeth a man to *persevere to the end*. It is by the power of Divine grace that we are kept on in a *way* of faith and *obedience* to the end. Did not Divine grace support us, our *faith would fail*; and though we have overcome many difficulties already, yet our faith would *flag* at last, and we should be ready to  
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give up all our hopes. Therefore doth Christ tell *Peter* that he had prayed for him that his faith might not fail. This plainly intimates that if *Peter* had not had assistance from Divine grace, his faith would have failed. So likewise we should faint in the course of our obedience did not Divine grace support and uphold us, *Psal.* 73. 13. *Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency, faith that holy man.* When he was under the power of temptation, he was ready to give off his obedience, to give up the course of his walking with God, he began to repent he had been religious and walked with God. But now it is by the help of Divine grace that we are kept from fainting in the course of our obedience. The Lord hath promised that he will put his fear in our hearts that we shall not depart from him, *Jer.* 32. 40. Did not God put his fear into our hearts, we should be ready to depart from him. He also leadeth us in the paths of righteousness for his names sake, *Psal.* 23. 3. It is grace causeth us to persevere. It is *Austins* observation, That grace is necessary for the elect, when they are converted

sive cum cor-  
vertantur, sive  
cum periclitantur,  
sive cum coro-  
nantur.

verted first of all, *It is necessary* for them when they *war and combat*, and it is necessary for them when they are *crowned* at last. It is Divine grace that converts and turns our hearts to God first of all. It is grace upholds us in the spiritual conflict, and enables us to *fight the good fight of faith*, otherwise we should be *weary and faint* in our minds, and we should be ready to give up the field. And then it is grace that crowns us at last, so that all is of grace. And it is another memorable speech of *Austin*, *After mans fall, God would have it appertain to nothing but his grace, that man should come to him at first, and it doth also appertain to the same grace only, to keep him that he should not depart from him.* So that after mans fall it is Divine grace that first brings man back to God, and it is the same grace that holds man close to him in the course of obedience, so that he never depart from God again, but goes on to persevere in the way of faith and obedience to the end.

*Partic. 9.* 9. The Excellency of Divine grace appears in this, that it carries a man above the fears of death. It is grace only that carries a man above the fears of  
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of death, and makes him willing to lay down this life, and can'th him sweetly and placidly to *resign* up his soul into Gods hands. *Father, into thy hands,* saith Christ, *I commit my spirit.* Lord Act. 7. 59.

*Jesus,* saith *Stephen,* *receive my spirit.* Nature abhors the thoughts of dissolution, nature cannot indure to think of parting with this life, *Not that we would be unclothed,* saith *Paul,* *but that mortality might be swallowed up of life,* 2 Cor. 5. 4. *Paul* himself found in himself an abhorrence in nature as to dissolution. O but then the power of Divine grace in him made him to speak otherwile, *I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ.* Here we see the different language of *nature* and *grace* in the same person. Nature makes him say, *not that I would be unclothed,* but grace makes him say, *I desire to be dissolved,* so that grace overcomes nature. When nature abhors nothing more than death, and dissolution, yet such is the power of Divine grace, that it makes a man freely to lay down his life, and to surrender up his soul sweetly into the hands of God.

*Lastly,* The last particular I shall *Partic. 10.* mention to shew the excellency of Divine

vine grace is this, It is the happiness of Heaven to be always acted by Divine grace; to *think*, to *love*, to *desire*, to *will*, to *speak*, to *act* nothing but as Divine grace would teach and incline us to do, this is the perfection of Heaven it self. What is the perfection of Heaven, but that we shall be full of grace and of the spirit of God? The perfection of Heaven consists in this, that grace and the spirit of God shall act us *universally*, always, and in all things. The happiness of Heaven is described by this, that *God shall be all in all*, 1 Cor. 15. And *one way* by which God is *all in all* is this, that in Heaven, we shall be *full* of the spirit of God, and that we shall be *purely*, and *perfectly*, and *eternally* acted by the spirit of God. Here *nature* and *self* sway us very much, but the perfection of Heaven is this, that we shall be purely and solely acted by the spirit of God, and *flesh* and *nature* shall no more have the sway in us, but we shall do every thing as the spirit of God acts us. How excellent is a *Saint* here on earth? What a *beauty* and *majesty* doth there appear in him here on earth, so far as he is acted by the spirit of God  
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and by *Divine grace* ? That which makes any thing *uncomely* in a Christian, is that nature, and corruption, and self appears in him. But so far as grace and the spirit of God acts him, there is nothing but beauty, loveliness and comeliness that appears in him. How excellent I say, is a Saint so far as he is acted by the grace of God here on earth ? Oh but there are many mixtures of corruption, and imperfections in the best of the Saints here on earth, there is none of the Saints so perfectly acted by Divine grace, but something of *self* and *corruption* interposeth. O but in Heaven he shall be purely, and perfectly, and eternally acted by the spirit of God, nothing shall come from him then but what favours of the spirit of God. Now if the perfection of grace, be the perfection of Heaven it self, how excellent then is Divine grace that brings us near to the life of Heaven ?

Thus have I shewn the excellency of Divine grace in several particulars.

And what should all that that we have heard concerning the *Doctrine* of grace, and the *excellency* of it teach us ?

1. It should cause us to *love* Divine grace,

grace, to prize it, and long after it more, to covet it, and pray for it more than we do for temporal things. Had we *spiritual eyes* to see the *beauty* and *excellency* of *Divine grace*, we should not be so fond of other things, and neglect *grace*, our main desires would run out after *grace*.

2. We should make this *Use* from what we have heard of the Doctrine of *Divine grace*, we should pray that we may feel the *operations* and *effects* of *Divine grace* put forth in our souls. We have heard how that *grace* causeth a man to deny his own *wisdom*, *will*, *affections*, *inclinations*, and to *resign* himself wholly to Gods will. We have heard how *grace* causeth a man to be *satisfied in God* and *with God* in the want of other things: We have heard how *grace* elevates the soul to the *desire* of the *Heavenly Country*; how it causeth a man to persevere in faith and obedience to the end, to lay down this life when God calls him thereunto. Now we should pray to feel and find that *presence* of *Divine grace* in our souls that we may be carried forth to all these things; *then* and *never* till then shall we know the sweetness of  
 Divine

Divine grace and the excellency of it, when we find these *sweet operations*, and *powerful effects* of *Divine grace* upon our hearts. He that hath found these *operations* and *workings* of *Divine grace* in his soul, cannot but love *Divine grace* above all other things whatsoever.

Having shewed the *Excellency* of *Divine grace*, it remains only that I should propound some *means* in order to the obtaining of *grace*. God promiseth to give a *sufficiency* of *grace* to his people, *My grace shall be sufficient for thee*. What are the most *proper means* for us to obtain *sufficiency* of *grace* from God according to all our necessities?

I. Let us labour to be deeply *sensi- Direct. I.*  
*ble* of the *need* of *Divine grace*. Our *Saviour* telleth us, *That without him we can do nothing*, John 5. Although we have the *habits* of *grace*, yet we need *actual grace* to enable us to do any thing that is *good*. *Paul* saith, that to *will* was *pre'tent*, but how to *perform* that which was *good* he *knew* not: we need *actual assisting grace*, to carry us through every duty. Now we ought to be deeply sensible of the  
 need

1 Pet. 5. 5.

need we have of Divine grace. *God gives grace to the humble*, the *humble soul* is the soul that God *singles out* to give grace unto, and when are we humble? Truly then are we humble when we are *poor in spirit*, when we are sensible of our own *impotency* and *inability* to do any thing that is *spiritually good* without Divine grace. It is a speech of the wise man, *He that trusts in his own heart is a fool*. There is nothing that hinders us more from the *reception of Divine grace*, than when we are *self-confident*, and *presume* upon our own *sufficiency*. The promise is, *my grace shall be sufficient for thee*. If we have a *self-fulness*, a *self-sufficiency* we are not like to have a *sufficiency* of Divine grace. What need hath he of a *sufficiency* of grace from God that thinks he hath a *sufficiency* of strength in himself? Paul saith that he had not *sufficiency* of himself to *think any thing*. We ought to be deeply sensible of our absolute dependence upon Divine grace, and that without Divine grace we are nothing. One *great reason* why God suspends and withholds *grace* and *assistance* from us, is, because we think that we have  
*strength*

*strength and sufficiency* at our own command, and because we have been carried out so and so formerly, and have been *acted by Divine grace so and so*, therefore we are ready to think it is in our own power to *act* as we have done. *Therefore* is it that God leaves us to our selves, to shew us what we are without the assistance of his grace. God will have us to see that *all is of grace*, and if he suspend and withhold his grace never so little, we cannot do what we have done.

2. If we would obtain Divine grace, *Direct. 2.*  
 let us *prize grace* above *temporal things*. Our desires are apt to run out after *other things*, but the main of our desires should run out after Divine grace. Let me say (But O how few Christians believe it, or live as if they did believe it?) That God doth more for us, in communicating the *least grace* to us, than in bestowing on us the *greatest temporal blessing*. And the reason is plain, because grace is in order to a *supernatural good*. Grace lies in a *tendency* to our *communion with God* here, and our injoyment of him hereafter. Now grace being such a *gift as is of a higher rank and order* than

than any temporal good, we ought to prize it as such. I have often *thought*, to the Lord *keep us from sin*, and *give us a sufficiency of grace to act* us throughout our whole lives, we need not be greatly solicitous about any thing else. It is the greatest happiness in this world to be *kept from sin* and to have a sufficiency of grace to act us. Whatever *temporal thing God denies us*, if we have but a *sufficiency of grace to act* us, and to help us to do that which is *pleasing* in his sight, it is *enough*. It was *Paul's* great option and wish, that *whether present or absent he might be acceptable to God*, 2 Cor. 5. 9. Now as long as we are *acted* by Divine grace we shall have a *testimony* in our selves that we are *accepted* of God. Not that the *fundamental acceptance* of our persons depends upon *our grace* and obedience, this depends upon the *perfect obedience and righteousness* of *Christ*. But so far as we are *acted* by Divine grace, we shall have a testimony in our selves, that what we do is *pleasing* to God. And canst thou desire a greater happiness O Christian than this, to have such a testimony as *Enoch* had, that thou hast pleased God?

So far as thou art acted by Divine grace thou shalt have this testimony given thee that thou hast pleased God, 1 John 3. 22. *whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.*

3. Let us *thirst* after grace, the promises are made to *thirsting*, Blessed are they that hunger, and thirst, after righteousness, they shall be filled. And it is a great Text, John 7. 37. *If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink, he that believes on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.* Christ promiseteth a liberal effusion of grace and the spirit to them that *thirst* and come to him for grace. The *living water* here spoken of, is grace and the spirit; so it follows, *Thus spake he of the spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.* Here then is the *living water*, namely the spirit, and the grace of the spirit: well! But here are *rivers of living water*. He that believes on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of *living waters*. *Ye* is not *drops of living water*, but *rivers of living water*. This sets forth the copiousness and abundance, of that  
S grace

Direct. 3.  
Math. 5. 6.

grace that Christ will communicate, and then these *rivers* shall *flow* too; out of his belly shall *flow* rivers of living water, that is, there shall be a free passage of Divine grace unto the *believing soul*, nothing shall impede and hinder the current of Divine grace to a believing soul, and then it is said, *Out of his belly*, (for I take it that there is weight in every word) that is, grace shall be a *living spring* within him. *Out of his belly*, grace comes *primarily* from Christ the head of the Church, but a believer, by union with Christ, and dependance upon Christ, shall have grace *as a living spring* in him; that I take to be the meaning, compare this with John 4. 14. *But whosoever drinketh of the water, that I shall give him, shall never thirst; But the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.* A believers grace comes all from Christ the head of the Church. O but his *supplies* of grace by living upon Christ the head of the Church shall be *so constant*, as if so be he had a *spring* of grace in himself. It shall be *in him a well of water*, springing up into everlasting life, it notes the *constancy*



stancy of supply that shall be to every believing soul that lives upon Christ as his head.

4. Let us pray for the spirit and *Direct. 4.* Divine grace much. *Ask, and ye shall have, seek, and you shall find, Mat. 7.* God hath promised to give the spirit to them that ask him. When Paul would obtain strength against his temptations; what was the course that he took, *For this thing I besought the Lord thrice.* We may pray for temporal things, and not always have what we would have, because God doth not always see temporal things to be good for us. But if we pray for Divine grace, the Lord will be sure to hear us as to that: and though we have not such *measures* of grace as we would have, yet we shall have a *sufficiency* of grace, such a measure of grace as God in his infinite wisdom thinks fit for us; so the promise runs, *My grace shall be sufficient.* We may not have as much grace as we would, but we shall have such a measure of grace as God sees best for us, we shall have a *sufficiency* of grace.

5. If we would obtain Divine grace, *Direct. 5.* let us labour for that *holy skill* of deriving

iving grace from *Christ the head of the Church*, Ephes. 1. latter end, *God hath given him to be head over all things to his body the Church.* This is a myserie, though few Christians I am afraid, understand it, as they ought, that Christ is appointed of God, *as head of the Church* to dispense and give forth all grace to the Church, and every member of it. God hath given him *to be head over all things*, that is a great expression, *over all things*, that is, *to all intents and purposes.* Christ is appointed head of the Church as to all ends, and *uses* whatsoever, that whatever grace we need, we must receive it from Christ as our head, and he is appointed of the Father to give it out. Therefore here lies our great concernment, to labour after a holy skill to derive grace from Christ as *head of the Church.* I am afraid, we are greatly defective here. The greatest part of Christians I am apt to believe are more acquainted with living upon the *righteousness of Christ for justification*, than they are acquainted with the way of *deriving grace*, and *spiritual influence* from Christ the head of the Church for sanctification. It is  
not

not enough that we know how to have recourse to Christ for *pardon* and *justification*, but we should be acquainted with Christ as the head of the Church, and live upon him for *actual* grace and spiritual influence. John 15. 4. *Abide in me, and I in you.* We must learn that skill to *abide in Christ* by the *attractive acts* of faith, or we shall make little of sanctification.

Here it may be said, wherein doth *Question.*  
this skill consist of deriving *actual* grace from Christ the head of the Church?

If we would be skilled in this my- *Answer.*  
stery of drawing *virtue* from Christ the head of the Church, we must attend to these two things.

1. We must look to the *humanity of Christ* as the first *receptacle* of grace, John 1. 14. *The word was made flesh full of grace and truth.* The word, the *second person* in *Trinity* assuming our nature, the *humane nature in Christ*, by means of the *personal union* comes to be filled with all grace. The humane nature I say, by its *personal conjunction* with the word, is filled with grace, and therefore that *immediately* follows, *the word was made flesh, full of grace and truth.* No

sooner was our nature united to the *second person* in *Trinity*, but by means of *this union*, it comes to be filled with all grace. So that the *humane nature* in Christ is the first *receptacle* of grace, that is the first thing we are to attend unto.

2. We must look to the *divinity* in Christ as *replenishing* his *humanity* with all grace, and in the *humane nature* assumed, becoming the *fountain* of grace to us, Col. 2. 9. For in him dwelleth all the *fulnes* of the *God-head* bodily. The *fulnes* of the *God-head* by means of the *personal union* dwells in Christ, and mark it, by means of the *personal union* it becomes the *fountain* of grace to us. First, it fills the *humanity* of Christ. The *God-head* fills the *humanity*, and by the *humanity*, and through the *humanity* it conveys grace to us. So that faith in having recourse to Christ for *actual* grace, hath to do with both *natures* in Christ, the *humane nature*, and the *divine nature*. First, Faith hath to do with the *humane nature*, faith is to eye the *humane nature* as the first *receptacle* of grace, and as the *organ* by which grace is conveyed to us: Secondly, Faith hath

hath to do with the Divine nature as the principle *efficient* of all grace, Joh. 1. 16. *Of his fulness we receive grace for grace.* This *fulness* here spoken of, is *primarily* and *originally* in the God-head, and then secondly, this *fulness* is *derivatively* in the *humane nature of Christ*, and that in these two respects.

1. In that the humane nature in Christ hath all the *habits* and *effects* of grace imprest upon it that nature is capable of.

2. That the *humane nature* is the *organ* of the Divinity, *in* and *by which* all grace is *diffused*, and communicated unto us. *Of his fulness we receive grace for grace.* Now we should study more the way of *having recourse to Christ*, and *drawing* actual grace from him; the more we can *eye* the *Divinity* in Christ as filling him with all Grace, and lean upon him as our Head for all grace, the more grace we shall receive from him.

6. If we would obtain *Divine grace*, *Direct. 6.* let us be greatly *thankful* for what grace we have already received, *To him that hath shall more be given.* As we should be thankful for all the

gifts of God, so especially for the *gift of grace*, because it is one of the choicest and best of all the gifts of God. If we are bound to bless God for *temporal mercies and favours*, much more for *Divine grace*. Nothing will cause God sooner to suspend grace from us, than *unthankfulness* for what grace we have received. God would have us to know that *grace* is no *small gift*, therefore when we are not deeply sensible of what mercy God hath shewn us in giving us what grace we have already received, nothing is so likely to deprive us more of grace. God sets a high price on his grace, and he would have us do so too, therefore if God have given us any grace, we should be more thankful for that, than for any temporal blessing; *And to him that hath shall more be given.*

*The end of the Twelfth Sermon.*

SERMON

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# SERMON XIII.

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2 Cor. 12. 9.

*And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*

I Am now come to the last part of this Text. I did in the last exercise finish that clause, *My grace shall be sufficient for thee*, where I took occasion to handle the *Doctrine of Grace*. I come now to speak to the last clause, which is in these words, *For my strength is made perfect in weakness*. These words, as likewise the former, *My grace shall be sufficient for thee*, are the *Lords* own words to *Paul*, they were spoken *immediately* by the Lord himself to *Paul*, and therefore ought to bear so much the more weight with us. The *person* who spake these words was *Christ*, and that appears from the end of the verse. *Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmity that the*  
*power*

power of Christ may rest upon me. Paul had made his prayer to Christ, For this thing, saith he, I besought the Lord thrice, that is, the Lord Christ. I besought the Lord Christ, I made my prayer unto Christ. Where we may observe by the way, that it is lawful for us to direct our prayers to Christ, we may direct our prayers to either of the persons in the Trinity, and we may direct our prayers to Christ, as Paul did here, I besought the Lord, that is, the Lord Christ, so Stephen did Acts 7. Lord Jesus receive my spirit. Now as Paul had directed his prayer to Christ, so he receives an answer from Christ, and he said, My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness. And he said, who was this that said this? It was he that Paul had directed his prayer to, to wit, the Lord Christ. As we may lawfully pray to Christ, so Christ is able to hear and answer our prayers, John 14. 13, 14. whatsoever you ask the Father in my name, I will do it, he doth not say the father will do it, but I will do it. Now the answer Christ gives to Paul is this, My grace is sufficient for thee, for  
my



*my strength is made perfect in weakness. My grace is sufficient for thee,* of that I have already spoken, that which I have now to speak of is the latter clause, *For my strength is made perfect in weakness.* Now this latter clause, *For my strength is made perfect in weakness,* is a reason and explication of the former clause, *My grace shall be sufficient for thee.* Paul had prayed that the *thorn in the flesh*, the messenger of Satan might depart from him, Christ doth not give this answer to Paul, that this shall be done for him, that he prays for, Christ doth not tell him, that the temptation shall be removed and taken away, but he gives in this answer, that his grace shall be sufficient for him. The temptation was still to continue upon Paul, but Paul was to have a *sufficiency of grace* to help him under the temptation. Now in the *Text*, Christ gives the *reason*, why it is that he takes this course, that temptation shall continue upon Paul, and not be removed presently, but he shall have grace to assist him under his temptation. The reason why *Christ* takes this course with Paul is, that so by this means Christ's  
power

*power*, Christ's *virtue*, Christ's *strength*, may be *illustrated*, and *made known* so much the more. Such was *Paul's infirmity*, that *Paul* of himself would certainly succumb, and faint under his temptations, he would certainly be overcome by them, if he were left to himself. Now the Lord had two ends in continuing *Paul's* temptation upon him.

1. To shew to *Paul* his *own infirmity*, to discover to him his *own impotency* and *inability* to stand under his temptation if left to himself.

And then, 2. Another end of Christ was to make known his *power* and *grace*, that when *Paul's* infirmity would certainly have suffered him to fall, yet the power and grace of Christ should make him stand. This I take to be the proper scope and design of these words, *For my strength is made perfect in weakness*. Christ would have *Paul's* temptation to continue upon him, that by this means his power and grace might be so much the more illustrated in supporting *Paul* under his infirmity. The words are *plain*, and are easily resolved into this *proposition*.

Doct.

Doct. *That Christs strength is perfected in our infirmity, or else Christs strength is perfected in mans infirmity, For my strength is made perfect in weakness.*

Doct.

Ἡ τοῦ δυνάμει  
μου ἐν ἀδυναμίᾳ  
τελειῖται.

A point though it may seem plain, yet it is of great ule unto exercised souls, and none will understand the sweetness of this point, but those that have been under exercises.

For the unfolding of this proposition we must consider,

1. What we are to understand by *infirmity*, that is one term in the Text, *My strength is made perfect in weakness, or infirmity*; what are we to understand by infirmity?

2. What is meant by the *power of Christ*, *My power or my strength is made perfect in weakness.*

3. How the power of Christ is made perfect in infirmity.

4. What that power or strength of Christ is, that is made perfect in the Saints infirmities.

And then we shall come to the reasons of it.

1. What are we to understand by infirmity, *My strength is made perfect in*

in

*in weakness or infirmity*; there are *infirmities* of several sorts and kinds: but there are three sorts of infirmities that are principally intended in this Text.

1. There are *natural infirmities*.

2. *Moral infirmities*.

3. There are the *accidents* or *occurrences* that fall out in humane life; all these may be well taken in here.

1. There are *natural infirmities*. Now *natural infirmities*, are either *infirmities* of the *body* or of the *mind*.

1. There are *infirmities* of the *body*. Infirmities of the body are such as these, *weakness*, *sickliness*, *Crafiness* of the natural temper; all manner of diseases and distempers that are incident to the bodies of men, these come under the name of *natural infirmities*.

2. There are *infirmities* of the *mind*, as namely *meanness* and *lowness* of parts, *dulness* of apprehension; *shallowness* and *weakness* in the judgement; unretentiveness in the memory, and the like, these are infirmities appertaining to the soul, and these are the first sort of infirmities, namely, those that we call *natural infirmities*, belonging to the *body* or *mind*.

2. There are *moral infirmities*, now by

## Several Sorts or Kinds of Infirmity.

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by *moral infirmities* we are to understand two things.

1. *Weakness* and imperfection of grace.

2. The *reliques* and *remainders* of sin and corruption in the Saints, and the Saints of God labour under these infirmities.

1. There is *weakness* and *imperfection* of grace in the Saints. Though they have *truth* and *sincerity* of grace, yet there is a great *imperfection* of grace in them, *imperfection* in their *knowledge*, *we know but in part*, as the *Apostle* speaks, *imperfection* in their *faith*, and *love*, and other *graces*. 1 Cor. 13. 9.

2. The *Saints*, they have the *reliques* and *remainders* of sin in them. Thus *Paul* complains, *In me, that is in my flesh, there dwells no good thing*, Rom. 7. 18. and in the last verse of that Chapter, *with the flesh he served the law of sin*. Now these *reliques* and *remainders* of sin that are in the Saints may properly be called *infirmities*, because though the Saints have these infirmities, these *reliques* and *remainders* of sin in them, yet these do not reign in them, they feel the bent of their will set against sin; though sin hath a being in

in them, and though they find the *motions* of it, arising from corruption and the unregenerate part in them, yet the bent of their will is set against it. Therefore *Paul* saith in that Text before, *With my mind I serve the Law of God, but with my flesh the law of sin; with my mind I serve the law of God*, the deliberate purpose of his will, the bent of his will was set against it, though by reason of the remainders of sin in his flesh, he was many times surprized, overtaken, carried often contrary to that which was the deliberate purpose of his will.

3. By *infirmities*, we are to understand the *accidents* and *occurrences* that do belong to humane life, as *crosses*, *losses*, *hardships*, *difficulties*, *distresses*, and the like, whatever may fall out in the course of providence that may tend to debase us, or depress us and lay us low, all these things come under the name of *infirmity*. *Calvin* observes that *infirmity* in this place is a *general name* and under it is comprehended, as well the *imbecillity* of our nature, as all those things that fall out in providence that may tend to humble us. Whatever falls out in providence that tends to humble

*Tam naturæ no-  
stæ imbecilli-  
tas, quam om-  
nia abiectionis  
argumenta.*  
*Calvin.*

us, this comes under the name of the Saints infirmities. The *Apostle* himself in the words after the Text teaches us what he understands by *infirmities* in vers. 10. *Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproach, in necessity, in persecution, in distress, for Christs sake, for when I am weak then am I strong.* Here we see the *Apostle* joyns *infirmity* with *reproaches, necessities, persecutions* and *distress*, so that whatever was matter of abasement and humiliation to *Paul*, these he reckoned a part of his *infirmities*.

The *second* thing we are to speak to in the Text is, what we are to understand by the *power of Christ, my strength is made perfect in weakness, or infirmity*, what are we to understand by this strength or *power of Christ*?

To open this, we must know, that *Christs power* may be considered in the *root*, or in the *effect*. The power of Christ considered in the *Root*, is that *vertue*, that *strength*, that is in Christ himself. Christs power is infinite, Christs power considered in it self is the same with the Fathers power, *I and the Father are one*, John 10. 30.

*I and my Father are one*, that is, one in essence, and one in power. And here it is well observed by a *learned man*, that in this *Text* we have a proof of Christs *divinity*. For if it be *Christs power* that carries the Saints through their difficulties and temptations, then certainly Christ must needs be *God*. Now the Apostle tells us it was the *power of Christ* that *rested* upon him, that carried him through all his temptations.

*Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in mine infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.* If it was the *power of Christ* that carried *Paul* through all his temptations and trials, and which carries the Saints through all their trials and temptations, therefore Christ must needs be *God*, for nothing but infinite and an almighty power can carry the Saints through all those difficulties and temptations they are exercised with.

2. The *power of Christ* may be considered in the *effect*, and so the power of Christ is nothing else but the effect of his power put forth in us, Eph. 3. 20. *According to the power that works in us.* There is a *power* put forth in us, and that



that is the power that is here meant, *My power is made perfect in infirmity*, that is, the *energy, efficacy and operation* of my power, is seen in mans infirmity. This I take to be the plain meaning, *mans infirmity* makes way for the *putting forth* of the *effects* of my power in him. Now there is a twofold power of Christ that we may distinguish of.

1. There is the *power* of his *providence*.

2. The *power* of his *grace*.

1. There is the *power* of his *providence*, *God hath spoken once, yea twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God*, Psal. 62. 11. *power belongeth unto God*, that is, *power* to *administer* and order all things in his providence as he pleaseth. So in Heb. 1. 3. *Upholding all things by the word of his power*. Now the power of Christs providence is seen in mans infirmity, that is, the greater mans weakness and infirmity is, the more is the power of Divine providence seen in upholding of him.

2. There is the *power* of *Christs grace*, observe how the words lie, *My grace shall be sufficient for thee, for my strength*

strength is made perfect in weakness, here grace and power seem to be *synonymous*, they seem to be put one for another; Christs *grace* is his *power*; Christs *grace* is that *Divine help* and *assistance* he gives to us, and his *power* it is his *grace*, that assistance of grace which he gives to his. So that the plain meaning is, *My power is made perfect in weakness*, that is, *the power of my providence and of my grace* is made perfect in mans infirmity.

Textual.

The 3. term to be explained in the Text is this, How is it that *Christs power is perfected* in infirmity, my strength is *perfected* or *consummated*: the plain meaning is, it is *illustrated*, it is *displayed*, it is made *visible*, and *conspicuous*. Two things, I conceive, are carried in this expression, *My strength is made perfect in weakness, or infirmity*.

1. That mans infirmity gives *occasion* to Christ to put forth his power; *My strength is perfected in infirmity*, as much as if it had been said, *My power hath occasion*, or *matter* of exerting it self when mans infirmity is discovered. God is not wont to manifest, and put forth his power, till our in-

infirmitie appears; and when our infirmitie doth appear, then is the time and season Christ is wont to put forth his power. There are many great Scriptures speak to this, *For the Lord shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants; when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up or left,* Deut. 32. 36. So in Isa. 40. 29. *He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might, he increaseth strength:* and it is a great expression that, *Hos. 14. 3. In him the Fatherless findeth mercy.* It is an expression I have read of *Luthers* upon that Text, It is a thing defined and determined, that if thou wilt find mercy, thou must be fatherless. God shews mercy to none but those that are fatherless. Thou must first be fatherless, thou must be helpless, thou must have no strength before God shew thee mercy. The creature must be reduced to nothing in it self, before God put forth his strength to help us. And it is another expression of *Luther*, God in his proper form and nature is such a God who loves afflicted persons, and who hath compassion upon them who are in distress,

who are deprest and brought low. *I was brought low and he helped me*, saith the Psalmist. God puts forth his power then when man is brought lowest.

The 2. thing implied is this, That Christs power it is made *visible and conspicuous* to us by our infirmities. We should never have so *clear a sight of Divine grace*, had not we first a sight and sense of our own infirmity. This expression of being *perfected*, *My strength is made perfect in weakness*, it hath relation to our *sense*, the *sense and feeling* of our own infirmity is that which gives us experience of Gods power so much the more. Had we no *sense* of our own infirmity, we should be apt to think we had a sufficiency in our selves, but when we see and perceive our own infirmity, then we see it is by anothers strength and not by our own, that we are inabled to do and suffer what we do and suffer. If we had not some *sense and experience* of our own *infirmity*, we should think the strength and sufficiency were in our selves. O but God leaves us under infirmity, that we may see the *strength and ability* God affords us under

der infirmity, is anothers, and not our own. This I take to be the meaning of the words, *My strength is made perfect in infirmity.*

The 4. thing which we are to inquire into, and that which is of great moment in this matter, is this,

What is that *power* and *grace* of Christ that is put forth and made known in our infirmity?

1. *Supporting grace* is made known by our infirmity. Our infirmity is a means whereby the grace of Christ in *supporting* us is seen more clearly. When our burdens are many, and our *pressures* great upon us, it is a wonder we do not sink and faint under them, and therefore when we are under great *trials*, *pressures* and *temptations*, it is infinite power that doth support us, and the power of Christ is then made known in infirmity when we are supported under such burdens and temptations, which were enough to sink flesh and blood, and to crush such poor *frail creatures* as we are. I say, *supporting grace* is made visible by the *Saints infirmities.* *Isa. 41. 10.* It is the promise of God to the Church,

and though it is spoken to the Church in general, yet it is applicable to the particular members of the Church, *I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.* Here is supporting grace. Psal. 145. 7. *The Lord upholdeth them that fall,* that is, God upholdeth them that are ready to fall. The Saints of God are sometimes near *overwhelming*, so great are the *burdens* and pressures that they lie under, that they are almost sunk under them, then doth God put under *his everlasting arms*, and *upholds* them. It is a pregnant Text, Psal. 94. 17, 18. *Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence,* that is, I had been a *lost man*, I had given my self for *lost*, *My soul had almost dwelt in silence*, that is, I had gone down to *the grave*, the *place of silence*. My afflictions and pressures were so great, that they would have brought me down to the *grave*, the *place of silence*, compare this with Psal. 115. 17. *The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence,* that is, *the grave* the *place of silence*. So that

that the meaning is, unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence, that is, my afflictions had *sunk* me, and *swallowed* me up, brought me down to the grave. And then mark what follows in the next verse, *when I said my foot slippeth, thy mercy O Lord held me up*, here is *upholding grace*, and this was seen in the infirmity of this Holy man, which before he mentions, the infirmity of this Holy man made way for the discovery of this grace of God towards him.

2. *Assisting grace* is made perfect by our *infirmity*; the experience we have of the *risings* of our own *corruptions*, and the *insinuation* of Satans temptations, and also the experience we have of our own inability to deal either with the one or the other, shews us how much we are beholding to assisting grace to inable us to withstand or overcome them. And this seems to be the case in the Text, *Paul* saw an inability in himself to deal with the *thorn in the flesh*, that is, to grapple with those motions of corruption that Satans temptations did extimulate and stir up in him.

him. Now the Lord promisetht him his assisting grace, *My grace shall be sufficient for thee.* Now the power of God helping him to overcome these motions and temptations which he was infested with, was the more illustrated by this means, the power of assisting grace to inable *Paul* to overcome his temptation was more seen, than if *Paul* had no temptation at all.

3. *Recovering or restoring* grace is made perfect by our infirmitie, Psal. 23. 3. *Thou restorest my soul.* Thus the grace of Christ recovered and restored *Peter* after his fall. When *Peter* denied his Master, and our Saviour looked upon him, and conveyed his grace by that look, this begat repentance in *Peter*, he went out, and wept bitterly. Our infirmities make way for the illustrating the glory of *restoring* and *renewing* grace. For as we are unable to preieve and keep our selves from falling, so we are as unable to recover our selves when we are fallen. It is the grace of Christ which brings our hearts into frame, after they have been out of frame, Psal. 51. 10. *Create in me a clean heart O God, and renew*

Math. 26. 75.



*new a right spirit within me.* David needed a work of *creation* to pass upon him, after his fall. His heart was so disordered by sin, that it had need be set right again, and therefore he prays, Renew in me a right spirit. Sin had *distempered* him, and therefore he needed the grace of God to rectifie, and set things right in him. We cannot bring our own hearts into frame when they are out of frame. We should pine and languish away under our relapses did not Divine grace set us right. Now this is that which illustrates the Grace of Christ, that when we cannot recover or restore ourselves, after our falls, he recovers and restores us.

*Lastly, Reviving and comforting grace* is made known by the Saints infirmities. The Children of God have their *fainting fits*, *holy* and *experienced souls* know what belong to them. When their pressures are great, when their temptations and trials have been long and fore upon them, this brings them even to fainting, they are ready to say with *Daniel*, *they retain no more strength, neither have they any spirit* in

*in them.* David complains, Psal. 119. 25. *My soul cleaveth to the very dust.* And a verse or two after he saith, *My soul droppeth or melteth away for heaviness.* And Jonah saith, *My soul fainted within me,* Jonah 2. 7. *Secure persons,* who live at ease, and have no experience of temptation, and spiritual conflicts, know not the meaning of these things, but *holy experienced souls* know the meaning of them. The Saints of God are sometimes brought to such extremities, by their afflictions and temptations, that they are even in a manner *overwhelmed* by them. The title of Psal. 102. is remarkable to evidence this, *A prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord.* The Saints then are sometimes overwhelmed by their sorrows and temptations. Now these *fainting fits* the Saints are cast into, make way for *reviving or comforting grace*, 2 Cor. 7. 6. *God who comforts them that are cast down.* It is one of the titles given to God, *God that comforts them that are cast down,* and it is a great Text which was hinted before, Isa. 40. 29. *He gives power*

to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Were not the Saints brought to these faintings sometimes, were they not brought to this, to think, they had *no strength*, no might, they would not see the power of God which revives them, when they are brought to the very brink of the grave, to the very brink of destruction.

This should teach us *cheerfully* to submit to those afflictions, trials, temptations, and all manner of exercises that God is pleased to exercise us with. Under the name of *infirmities*, all manner of afflictions and trials are comprehended. Now if Christs power be perfected in our infirmity, that is, by our trials, temptations, exercises, we should cheerfully submit to this discipline, James 1. 2. *Count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations*, that is, when you fall into divers *afflictions* and *trials*, *count it all joy*; a strange Doctrine to flesh and blood! what is it a matter of *joy* to be afflicted? Is it a ground for *all joy* for a man to be afflicted? Truly, it is so in respect of the consequents, it is not so in respect of it self.

self. Look upon affliction in it self, and no affliction is for the present *joyous* but *grievous*, so the *Apostle* tells us, *Heb. 12. 11.* But it is a matter of joy to fall into afflictions in respect of the *consequents*, *count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.* Why so? The following words tell us, *knowing that the trial of your faith worketh patience.* The Saints *afflictions* so far as they are sanctified, are a means to increase their *faith* and *patience*, and the *gain* of a little grace by our afflictions makes amends for all our afflictions. If we gain *faith* or *patience*, or any grace whatsoever by our afflictions, the *gain* of a little grace is a *greater good* than there is evil in our afflictions. Besides, if Gods strength, and power, be manifested in our weakness and infirmity, we ought willingly to submit to those trials, and afflictions, and temptations that he laies upon us. We are bound (though it be a hard lesson to flesh and blood) to love the glory of God above our own ease and quiet. If therefore the power and grace of Christ, be illustrated in our afflictions and exercises, it becomes us the more cheerfully to submit

submit to them, because God will have a revenue of glory this way. I remember it is an expression of *Luther*, *Christianus sine afflictionibus nil valet.* *Luther.* *A Christian without affliction is worth nothing.* We would fain take up with an *easy Christianity*, we would fain carry on a *smooth easy profession* without rubs or difficulties, or any considerable exercises and trials. We would have no temptations, we would meet with no troubles or afflictions in our way; but alas it will not be. Therefore let us remember this Text, *My strength is made perfect in weakness.* God will find out something or other to exercise us with all our days, and if we should be without exercises, God would lose his glory and we should lose the grace and experience that is gotten by these trials. Let us pray much that sin may be kept out of our afflictions; if sin be kept out of our trials and afflictions, none of our afflictions will do us hurt.

*The end of the Thirteenth Sermon.*

SERMON

# SERMON XIV.

2 Cor. 12. 9.

*And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*

**T**HE Doctrine propounded from these words was,  
Doct. *Christs strength is perfected in our infirmity.*

I come now to the grounds and reasons of the Doctrine which I shall briefly speak to, and then come to the Application.

*First,* For the grounds of the point, Why is it that God takes this course?

I. To

1. To let us see *our infirmity*.

And then, 2. To perfect his strength or power in our infirmity.

There are two grounds of this.

1. Because *Gods design* is to humble us. Now the sense of our infirmity is *Reason 1.* the proper means to humble us. It is a true saying, and a saying we can never think of too often, *The foundation of humility is the knowledge of some defect, or imperfection in our selves.* Whilst we have a *self-fulness*, a *self-sufficiency*, whilst we apprehend nothing but wisdom, *strength*, *ability*, and excellency in our selves, this lifts us up. For Pride, what is it, but a *vehement* or *strong* opinion of a *mans* own proper excellency? Now whilst we apprehend nothing but excellency in our selves, this lifts us up, therefore God in his infinite wisdom discovers to us our weakness, impotency, infirmity and imperfection, and the sight of our own infirmity and imperfection is a means to take down our *plumes*, and to depress and humble us. Now *our humiliation* makes way for *Gods exaltation*. The more the creature is humbled and debased, the  
 U more

more is God exalted. This is certain, when any excellency of the creature is seen and admired too much, the excellency of God is so much the more unseen; the admiration of the creatures excellency is a means to darken the glory of God, and therefore God draws a *Vail* upon our glory, that so God may be the more seen, Isa. 2. 17. *The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of man shall be made low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.* When all created excellency is laid low, then is Gods excellency the more advanced.

*Reason 2.* The 2. Reason is this, Gods strength is perfected in our infirmity, because the sense of our infirmity makes us to see *that all is of grace.* When God hath reduced us to *nothingness* in our selves, when God hath made us to see that we *are* nothing, that we can *do* nothing, then we clearly see, that all that we *are*, and all that we *have*, is of grace. It is *natural* to us to arrogate too much to our selves, to ascribe things to our own *strength, sufficiency* and *wisdom*, and therefore the



the Lord shews us our own folly, how unable we are to satisfy our selves in difficult cases. How often do we meet with such difficulties and perplexities in our lives that are beyond all our own wisdom to know how to resolve our selves in them, and to extricate our selves out of them? And God in his *infinite wisdom* leads us into these difficulties to make us see that it is beyond our *own wisdom* to help us out of them. And he also sheweth us our own *weakness* and impotency, to *withstand* such *temptations* as we meet with in our course, and then we clearly see that *all is of grace*; if we have any wisdom strength and sufficiency to help us in our difficulties and temptations, it is all of Divine grace. So that God first reduceth us to nothingness, and then helps us, to shew us that all is of grace, and that we may set the *Crown* upon the head of grace, and attribute nothing to our selves.

I come to the *Use* and *Application* of the Doctrine.

Is it so, that *Christs strength is perfected in mans infirmity*?

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The first Use shall be,

Use 1.

1. By way of *information*, This shews us, nothing doth more *obstruct* Divine grace, and shut the door against it than *self-fulness*, and *presumption* of our own *strength*, and *sufficiency*. In the Text it is said, *My strength is made perfect in infirmity*, that is, the *sense* of our infirmities makes way for the *manifestation* of Divine grace. Elsewhere it is said, *God gives grace to the humble*, 1 Pet. 5. 5. and in the same place, where it is said, *God gives grace to the humble*, it is said, *He resists the proud*. Look as *humility* prepares us for the reception of *Divine grace*: so on the contrary, *pride* obstructs, and stops the current of Divine grace. The *low valleys* are watered and receive the blessing of the showers from Heaven, whereas the tops of the high mountains remain dry and barren. Thus God delights to refresh low and humble souls with the dews of Divine and Heavenly grace, whereas such as are proud and lifted up with the conceit of their own excellencies and perfections, receive none of those Divine *dews* and *showers* of grace.

grace. *God fills the hungry with good things, the rich he sends empty away.* Therefore of all sins, it concerns us to watch most against *spiritual pride*. There is no sin that is a *greater enemy to the reception of Divine grace than pride*. Gods design is to shew us our own emptiness, and then to fill us with his fulness; but till we are emptied of *self*, we can never expect to be filled with Gods fulness.

The 2. Use is this, Is it so, that *Use 2.* *Christs strength* is perfected in our infirmity? Be exhorted from hence to labour to *get, and retain a deep sense* of our own infirmity; the more we retain a sense of our own infirmity, the more do we *prepare the way to the grace of Christ*, for *Christs strength is perfected in our infirmity*. Truly humility is the principal grace in a Christian. It is a memorable passage of *Calvin* in his *Institutions*. The *Foundation* of our *philosophie* is *humility*, As he that being asked, what was the first vertue in an Orator, said *pronunciation*, and being askt what was the second vertue in an Orator, said *pronunciation*, and being askt what was

the third vertue in an Orator, said *pronunciation*: so saith he, If any man should ask of me what is the *first vertue* of a Christian, I would say *humility*, if any one should ask what was the *second vertue* of a Christian, I would say *humility*, if any should ask what was the *third vertue* of a Christian, I would say *humility*, and always *humility*. The *foundation of Christianity* is humility. What is the whole *Gospel*? The *whole Gospel* lies mainly in these two things, that *our righteousness* lies out of our selves, and that *our strength* lies out of our selves. The Gospel therefore is a Doctrine of humility. Now humility ariseth from the sense of our own infirmity, nothing so proper a means to get and preserve humility in us as the sense of our own infirmity.

But here it may be said,

*Question.* *Quest.* What is *that sense* of our own infirmity that we should keep up in our selves; *My strength is made perfect in infirmity*. It is the design of God to make us sensible of our own infirmity. How ought we to be sensible of our own infirmity?

*Answer.*

*Answer.* 1. We ought to keep up a great sense of our great defects in *spiritual wisdom and knowledge*, 1 Cor. 8. 2. *If any man thinketh that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing as he ought to know.* We think we are wise, we need to be taught no more; Oh but we are very ignorant in many things. How ignorant are we of *God and Christ*, of the *will of God*, and our *own duty* in many points? Jer. 10. 14. *Every man is brutish in his knowledge*; the more humility there is in us, the more sensible shall we be of our own *brutishness* as to the knowledge of God. O let us consider that Text, Prov. 30. 2, 3. *Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy.* Why so? What is the matter? This was the case, this holy man was deeply sensible how defective he was in the knowledge of God. He was sensible how defective he was as to the knowledge of God in his *greatness and immensity*, and as to the knowledge of God in the *mysterie of the Trinity*, so it appears

in the following verse, vers. 4. *who hath ascended up into Heaven, or descended, who hath gathered the wind in his fist, who hath bound the waters in a garment, who hath established all the ends of the earth?* Here he complains of his ignorance, of the *greatness* and *immensity* of God. He had not such *becoming thoughts* of Gods *greatness* and *immensity* as he ought to have; and in the next words he complains of his ignorance in the *mysterie* of the *Trinity*, *what is his name, and what is his sons name, if thou canst tell?* O do any of us know God in his *attributes*, or do we know him in the *mysterie* of the *Trinity* as he ought to be known, and may be known? O let us be sensible of our great infirmity and defects as to *spiritual wisdom* and *knowledge*, that that which we do know is but the least part of that which we are ignorant of; therefore let us not think that we have known all that is to be known of God, for believe it, we are but *babes in knowledge* in comparison of what may be known of the *mysterie* of God, of the *Father* and of *Christ*.

It



It was not for nothing that the Apostle prays for them that they might *understand the mysterie of God, and of the Father, and of Christ*: the mystery of God, of the Father, and of Christ is a great mysterie. To know God in the *unity* and *simplicity* of his *essence*, to know God in the *Trinity* of persons, is so great a mysterie as we shall never be fully able to understand in this life.

Co'oss. 2 2.

2. We ought to be sensible of our *impotency* to resist temptations. We think we are strong and can resist any temptation; but when some great and prevailing temptation comes and bears us down, then we see how weak we are. *Peter* said, though all *denied Christ* yet he would not, but yet by *sad experience* he found the temptation too strong for him; we ought to be sensible that the many temptations we meet with in our course, will be too strong, and too hard for us, if we be left to our selves.

3. We ought to be sensible of the great *corruption* of our natures, and of that great *proneness* and proclivity that is in us unto evil, *In me, that is in* Rom. 7.  
my

*my flesh, there dwells no good thing, saith Paul. Nay, it may be said in our flesh, there dwellsevery evil thing. The spirit that is in us lusteth to envy, James 4. 5. If we observe our own hearts, we may see in them the seeds and principles of all evil; out of the heart, saith our Saviour, proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, there is the root of all sin to be found in our hearts. This sense of the corruption of our own hearts, and proclivity that is in them to evil, will be of great use to us.*

1. This will be a means to make us so much the more jealous over our own hearts. *He that trusts in his own heart is a fool, saith Solomon; and the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it? So deceitful, and wicked are our hearts that they will soon betray us to sin, if we be left to our selves.*

2. As this sense of the corruption of our nature will make us so much the more jealous over our own hearts, so this will make us see the *daily need* we have of *Divine grace*; the more experience we have of our own corruption,

on, the more we see our need of Divine grace to keep us; for whither would our corruptions hurry us, if Divine grace did not keep us?

4. We ought to be sensible of our inability to perform difficult services, yea our utter insufficiency to do the least thing that is good, without Divine grace. *Without me, saith our Saviour, ye can do nothing, John 15. 5.* Our Saviour doth not say without me ye can do no great thing, but he saith without me you can do nothing; just nothing, not the least thing, we have not sufficiency of our selves, saith the Apostle, to think any thing. What is less than a thought? O what should humble us more than this, to think that we cannot command a good thought? We must be beholding to Divine grace for every holy thought. This sense of our infirmity is that which makes way for the illustration of Christs strength, *My strength is perfected in infirmity.*

It was the speech of one, *that man cannot be perfected, who doth not confess himself to be infirm.* Our highest perfection in this life, it is to be sensible of our imperfection. It is another speech

*Perfeci non potest homo qui se non fatetur infirmum.*

Hanc unam p-  
fectis vite per-  
fectionem esse,  
ut se ino-  
cium agnoscat.

speech of one of the *antients*, if I misre-  
member not it was *Jeroms*, *This is*  
*the only perfection attainable in this*  
*life, that thou acknowledge thy self to*  
*be imperfect.*

5. *Lastly*, We ought to keep up a  
sense of the many *trials*, *afflictions*,  
*changes* and *vicissitudes* that we must  
expect to pass through in our present  
state, and our own inability to stand  
up under them, without *Divine* grace,  
without *Divine* help and aid. If we  
be now in prosperity, and think it shall  
be always thus, and never otherwise  
with us, this is a means to lift us up:  
whereas if we be still in expectation  
of affliction, and also are sensible of  
our own inability to undergo the least  
affliction without *Divine* help and as-  
sistance, this will be a means to hum-  
ble us. It was the speech of a wise  
and experienced Christian, *when I*  
*rise in the morning I expect what God*  
*will exercise me with before night.*  
It is good to be under the expectation  
of some new *trials* and exercises,  
this will be a means to keep us hum-  
ble, and this will be a means to pre-  
serve in us a sense of our infirmity,  
and

and make us see our constant need of *Divine grace*. If we think to live without afflictions we shall but deceive our selves so much the more, for afflictions will come whether we think of them or no. But if we be in a constant expectation of afflictions, this will be a means to humble us, and to bring us to a *sense* of our own infirmity, and when we are most *humble* and have the *greatest sense* of our own infirmity, then are we most prepared to receive *Divine grace*, for *Christs strength is perfected in our infirmity*, that is, in the *sense* of our infirmity; the more *sensible* therefore we are of our infirmity, the more are we prepared to receive *Divine grace*.

The 3. and Last Use is this, Is it *Use 3.* so that *Christs strength is perfected in our infirmity*?

This should teach us to pray much, that we may have more experience of *Christs power resting* upon us in our infirmity. This was *Pauls* ambition, here in the Text, *My strength is made perfect in infirmity*, what fol-

"Ira εἰς τὸν  
 ὕμνον ἐστὶν ἡ  
 ἰσχύς τοῦ  
 Χριστοῦ.

ut tanquam in  
 tabernaculo in-  
 habitet in me  
 potentia Christi.

follows? The next words are, *most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmity, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.* The words in the original, are very significant, *that the vertue of Christ may inhabit in me, or that the strength of Christ may pitch it self upon me,* or as the word signifies, *that the strength of Christ may tabernacle upon me*, therefore Beza renders it, *that the power of Christ may inhabit in me as in a Tent or Tabernacle.* To open this expression, two things seem to be intimated in it.

1. That we are poor weak frail vessels; that our bodies are like to Tents or Tabernacles, the body is often compared to a Tabernacle, 2 Cor. 5. 1. *For we know that if our earthly house of this Tabernacle, were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens.* Here the body is compared to a tabernacle, and so the Apostle Peter useth the same expression, *As long as I am in this my tabernacle;* and in the very next verse, *knowing shortly that I*

must

more experience of Christs Power.

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must put off this my Tabernacle, 2 Pet. 1. 13, 14. The body is like a poor Tent or Tabernacle, the stakes of it are not so strong, and deeply fixt, but it may soon be taken down, soon removed.

2. The expression intimates the need we have of *Divine power* and strength to support us, that the power of Christ may Tabernacle upon me, it is as much as if the *Apostle* should say, this poor Tabernacle of mine would be soon blown down, did not a Divine hand keep it up, and support it, therefore *Pauls* ambition was that Christs power might rest upon him.

But here it may be askt,

When may Christs power be said to rest upon us?

1. When we have a *present sense* of Christs power in our *extremities*; thus *Paul* a little after, in the Text, when I am weak, then am I strong, vers. 10. How so? when I am weak, then am I strong; this seems to be a contradiction! But the plain meaning is, when he had the *greatest sense* of his own infirmity, then he had the most

most experience of *Christs power* put forth in him, mans extremity is Gods opportunity.

2. Then do we find the power of Christ *rest* upon us, when we find the power of Christ *strengthening* of us to *bear* afflictions, 1 Col. 11. *Strengthened with all might according to his glorious power, unto all patience, and long-suffering with joyfulness.* It is the power of Christ in the Saints that strengthens them to *all patience*, and then doth the power of Christ rest upon them, when by the power of Christ they are inabled to bear afflictions with *joyfulness*, Phil. 4. 13. *I can do all things through Christ strengthening me, I am able to do all things, or I have power to do all things,* so the word signifies, *I have power and strength to do all things*, and what were these things, that Paul had a power to do? He could want, he could abound, he could be full, he could be hungry, he could bear all conditions with an equal mind. He had learned in whatsoever state he was, therewith to be content. Now it was the power of Christ resting on him that

Πάντα ἔχω.



that inabled him to do this. Nature cannot bear such vicissitudes, changes and variety of conditions with an equal mind. Nature *frets* and *storms* when it meets with variety of troubles. O but the *power* of Christ *resting* upon Paul made him bear all *changes* with an equal mind. Nothing but the *power of Christ resting on us* will make us bear all conditions, afflictions and changes with an equal mind. And then doth the power of Christ rest upon us, when by the strength of his grace we are inabled to bear up under all the afflictions that we meet with in the course of our pilgrimage.

3. Then may the power of Christ be said to *rest upon us*, when the *power* of Christ *acts* us and *carries* us forth in difficult duties and services. Christ hath promised, that his *Spirit* shall be in the heart of his people, John 14. 16. *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;* and in the latter end of the next verse, it is said, *He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.* How shall it be *in them*? It shall be *in them*, to *act* them. When

we find the presence of the spirit of Christ to act us in a *sensible manner*, then is the *power of Christ said to rest upon us.*

*Quest.*

But here it may be said, how may we do to attain to this? to have the power of Christ to rest upon us? for this is a desirable thing to feel the power of Christ to *rest upon us.* This was so desirable a thing to *Paul*, that he could *glory in reproaches, necessities and persecutions*, because by this means he had more experience of Christs power resting upon him. *Paul* was contented to undergo the greatest difficulties, afflictions and hardships, so that he might have experience of Christs power resting on him. And why is it so desirable a thing to feel Christs power resting upon us? The reason is, because every *approach of God*, and every *manifestation of the Divine presence* is most precious to the *Saints*. Now when the *Saints* have experience of *Christs power resting* on them, they are most sensible of Gods approaches to them; when Christs power rests upon them, it is a *manifestation of Gods presence* in them, and

and what can be more desirable to a holy soul, than to have some experience that God and Christ dwell in them?

How then may we attain to this, that the power of Christ may rest upon us?

1. We must carry a deep sense of *Answ.* our infirmities, the sense of our infirmity makes way for the manifestation of Christ's power, this we have heard already, when *we are weak in our selves* then have we most experience of Christ's strength, *when I am weak, then am I strong*, saith the *Apostle*, he that would have experience of Christ's strength must be reduced to nothingness in himself.

2. We must *subject* our selves to Christ as *our head*, it is a great expression, Eph. 5. 24. *Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ*, what is the import of that expression? What is it for the *Church* to be subject unto Christ? I conceive that the meaning is, That the *Church* and every member of it ought to own the *Authority* and *Supremacy* of *Christ* as its *head*, it ought to acknowledge him as the

John. 15. 4.

fountain and spring of all its *supplies*, and *depend* on him for all things, this is the *Churches subjection* to Christ, an *owning* and acknowledging Christ to be her head, owning and acknowledging his *power* and authority over her to supply all her wants, and to depend on him for all, this is for the Church to be subject to Christ, to subject her self to him in a *way of dependence*. *Abide in me, and I in you*; the promise of *Christs abiding in us*, is made upon our *abiding in him*, we cannot expect Christ should abide in us by way of *gracious influence*, unless we abide in him in a way of *dependence*.

3. And *Lastly*, We must *long* for, and *wait* for the power of Christ to be *exerted* and *put forth* in us. If we would have the power of Christ resting on us, we must look for power *without our selves* to *strengthen* us in *suffering*, and *act* us in *duty*. Phil. 4. 13.

ΕΥ ΤΩ ΕΙΣΟΥΑ-  
ΜΕΝ ΤΗ ΧΕΙΡΙ

*I can do all things through Christs strengthening me, through Christ in strengthening of me.* We must pray that we may feel the power of Christ *operating* and working inwardly in our hearts.

hearts. *Ephes. 3. 20.* We read of his power manifested in the Saints, *Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.* We should pray that we may feel and experiment more of this power that *works in the Saints.* The more experience we have of this power, the more shall we find that we are supported and born up under our afflictions and infirmities, the more we shall find we are enlarged and carried forth in all our services; whatever our *infirmities, afflictions, necessities and distresses* are, the *power of Christ resting on us* will carry us up above them all, *For his strength is made perfect in our infirmities.*

*The End of the Fourteenth Sermon.*

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# SERMON XV.

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Solomon's Song, 1. 4.

*Draw me, we will run after thee.*

**H**AVING shewed the *excellency* of *divine* Grace, I shall now take occasion from this Scripture to speak something concerning the *necessity* of Divine Grace, and the *sense* which the Saints have of the need they have of the help of Divine Grace. I take it for a certain Truth; that the elder we grow in Christianity the more sensible shall we be of the need we have of Grace. Younger Christians may be carried out much in the heat and strength of their affections, but elder Christians do easily perceive the need they have of Divine Grace. We have here the *profession* of the whole Church, she professeth the need that she hath of Grace, and therefore prays for it, *Draw me, we will run after thee.*

Her *petition* supposeth *her want*, she prays

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prays to be *drawn*, wherefore she *needs* to be *drawn*, *Draw me, we will run after thee*; she plainly intimates that unless she were *drawn*, she could not *run*. So that in these words, here is a plain declaration of the sense that the Church had of the need of Divine Grace. Her praying that she might be drawn by Divine Grace, supposeth that she needed Divine Grace to draw her, and her saying, *Draw me, and we will run after thee*, plainly shews that unless she had Divine Grace to draw her, she could not run.

In the words of the Text there are these three things to be considered, one whereof is supposed and the other two are implied.

That which is *supposed*, is the *need* which the Church had of the drawings of Divine Grace, and the *sense* that she had of the need of these drawings, *Draw me, we will run after thee*. Her praying to be *drawn*, supposeth her *need* to be drawn, for we are not wont to pray for that which we do not want. Therefore if the Church pray to be drawn, she *needs* to be drawn. This is therefore implied, the Churches want of Divine Grace, and the sense that

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she had of the want of this Grace.

There are two things exprest in the Text :

1. The Churches *petition*, *Draw me.* The

2. Is the *consequent* of granting this her petition, *Draw me, and we will run after thee.*

There are three Observations or Doctrines that do arise out of the words. The

*Doct. 1.* Is this, That *holy Souls* are *most sensible of the need which they have of the help of Divine Grace.* This is clearly implied here, when the Church prays, *Draw me*; she was deeply sensible of the need she had to be drawn; how drawn? drawn by Divine Grace. The

*Doct. 2.* Second Observation is, That the *sense which we have of the need of Divine Grace should make us pray so much the more for the drawings of Divine Grace.* The

*Doct. 3.* Third and last Observation is this, *The end why we should desire the drawings of Divine Grace, it is that our hearts*



*hearts may be more carryed out after God, Draw me, and we will run after thee.* The end why she desired to be drawn, was that her heart might be the more carryed out after Christ. These are the Observations that lie plainly in the Text.

I shall begin to speak a little of the

1. Of these, *holy souls are most sensible of the need which they have of the help of Divine Grace.* In speaking to this point there are two or three things to be spoken unto.

1. To shew you *what* that *grace* is that holy souls are sensible of a want, and constant need of in themselves. And,

2. What that *sense* is that holy souls have of the need and want of Divine Grace. And then,

3. The reasons of it.

1. *What* that *grace* is which holy souls are sensible of the need of.

I shall open this in several particulars, and the more experience we have attained unto, the more shall we understand the things that are set before us.

1. The Saints are sensible of the want of *quickenings* or *exciting grace*; this is *primarily* intended in the Text,

Text, *Draw me, we will run after thee*, why doth the Church pray to be drawn? this is implied, that she found her self very *dead, heavy, and lumpish* in the waies of God, she found her heart very unapt to move towards Christ, therefore it is that she prays to be drawn, *draw me*, that is, quicken me by *exciting grace*, I find my heart very dead, I find my Spirit lumpish, heavy, unapt to move towards thee, therefore quicken me by exciting grace. She was sensible she could not move towards Christ till exciting grace did quicken her. Holy souls are sensible of many *damps and deadnesses*, and *indispositions* that come upon them, they have not that *quickness, liveliness*, and *fervour* in the waies of God, that sometime they have felt. The more experience we have of our own hearts, the more we shall be sensible of these damps and deadnesses and indispositions that art apt to come upon us, and if we are not sensible of these things it is a sign we are not acquainted with our own hearts. *David* prays often in the 119. *Psalms* for quickening, *Quicken me, quicken me*, in several places of that *Psalms*; hence may we gather that he found a great deal of spiritual deadness that

that was come upon him. Do not we often find an indisposition to *prayer*, to *meditation*, to *holy conference*, oh then do we need *quickenings grace*, then do we need to pray as the Church doth here, *draw us*, when we find our hearts dead and lumpish in the waies of God, then do we need quickening or exciting Grace.

2. Holy Souls are oftentimes sensible of the want of *elevating grace* to raise and *elevate* their hearts to God. This also is in the Text, *Draw me, we will run after thee*. The Church was sensible that she could not *get up* her heart to God as she would have it carried up to him. *Draw me*, she would fain get an advance towards God, but she could not get up her Spirit to him as she would. She had not those *enlarged affections* towards God as sometimes she had, and therefore she prays to be drawn. Consider it well, do you not sometimes find your affections very *flat* and *low* to what they are at other times; either your affections stick in some lower inferior things, or else there is such a *clog*, a *weight* that lies upon them, that you cannot get them to ascend to God. O how seldom is it that we can get our affections

fections upon the wing to mount up and soar aloft towards God! our affections flag and sink, and it is well sometimes if we can tell whether we have any affections for God yea or no. Sometimes it may be we shall find our hearts carryed up aloft, above the *Sphear* of all *created things*, we shall find we love God *incomparably* above all things here below, at other times we find our hearts lumpish and heavy like a piece of *lead*, and cannot get them to ascend to God, as sometimes they do, therefore the Saints do want elevating grace, to elevate and raise their hearts to God: The Saints find the need of *Divine Grace* to elevate their hearts above *present things*.

It is natural to us to stick in *present things*, in things that are *seen*, and the Saints that have acquaintance with their own hearts, find they have need of *Divine Grace* to elevate their hearts above the things that are seen, to the invisible God. Unless *divine grace* raise us we shall sink into present sensible things and cannot get up above them. It is only *Divine Grace* that raises us above present things.

3. The Saints are sensible of the need they have of *corroborating* or *strengthening*

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ing Grace and that in these three particulars,

1. They see the need of *strengthening* grace to carry them through the *difficulties* of their Pilgrimage here on earth. The *elder* the Saints grow, the greater and sorer are their difficulties many times. God puts his people to the hardest lessons at last oftentimes, and *elder Christians* are more sensible of the need of Divine grace to carry them through the difficulties of their Pilgrimage. So great are their tryals and difficulties sometimes, that they meet with, that they are ready to faint under them, *Psal. 27. 14. Wait on the Lord, be of good courage and he shall strengthen thine heart.*

Why is this spoken, but only to shew us that the Saints are oftentimes reduced to such a case and condition, as that they had need to be bid to take heart and spirit to themselves, they are apt to despond and sink in their spirits through their own infirmities, and the greatness of their tryals that come upon them, they are apt to cast away their hope, and therefore they need Divine Grace to *strengthen* their hearts; and the Lord here promiseth that he will do it, *Wait*

*What Grace it is that the Saints need. on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart.*

The Saints find by experience hat their hearts are apt to despond within them, when their difficulties are great, and renewed upon them, and they have need to pray for corroborating Grace to fortifie and bear them up against the difficulties they meet withal.

2. They are sensible of the need of corroborating and strengthening Grace to support them under their sorrows and afflictions, Psal. 119.28. *My soul melteth away for heaviness, strengthen thou me according to thy Word.* In the original it is, *My soul droppeth*, that is, it is ready to die and faint away under my afflictions, therefore *strengthen me according to thy word*, unless thy Grace strengthen and uphold me, my soul will drop and melt away under my afflictions, my afflictions will be too hard for me, and sink me quite and clean, Psal. 119. 116. *Uphold me that I may live*, when a person is just ready to sink and faint away, unless there be one near to uphold him, he must needs fall to the ground. This holy man speaks here after this rate, I am just fainting away, *uphold me that I may live.* The Children of God find themselves

selves even fainting and dying away under their afflictions and pressures, therefore they find the need of upholding Grace, or else they must sink and perish. Those that are at ease know not the meaning of these things, but exercised souls know the meaning of them. Those that have been under Temptations know what *David* means when he saith, *My soul melteth away for heaviness, and uphold me that I may live.* Without Divine Grace the Saints would sink and perish in their afflictions.

3. They are sensible of the need of *strengthening Grace* to carry them out in the performance of duty, *To will is present with me,* saith the Apostle, *but how to perform I know not,* Rom. 7. 18. Holy souls find a mind and will to do many things, but how to do them and perform them *actually* they know not, they would fain deny themselves, they would fain bring their will to Gods Will without the least reluctance. They would fain Pray better, and Hear better, but when it comes to *perform*, they find they are very short, and they find the need of Divine Grace to help them to perform what they will to do. It is a great Scripture, *Psal. 119. 35. Make me to go*  
in

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*in the path of thy Commandments, for therein do I delight.* His delight was in the waies of God, yea but for all that he needed Grace to make him to walk in them, and therefore he prays, *Make me to go.* It may be we can say we have a delight to *pray*, a delight to *hear*, a delight to *meditate*, but for all this, we need *actual assisting grace* to inable us to *pray*, and to inable us to *hear*, and to inable us to *meditate*, *Make me to go in the path of thy Commandments, for therein do I delight.* Though he delighted in Gods Commandments, yet he wanted Grace to make him to *go* in them. Though we have a love and affection to holy duties, yet we want Divine Grace and assistance to carry us out in the performance of those holy duties that we love.

4. The Saints are sensible of the need they have of *mollifying grace* to *soften* and *break* their hearts, this is the language of the Church, *Isa. 63. 17. Lord why hast thou hardened our hearts from thy fear*; the Church here complains of her *hardness*, she is sensible of the need of *mollifying* Grace. Holy souls are sensible of much *hardness* and *unbrokenness* of spirit. It is a great trouble to them oftentimes that they cannot find their hearts



hearts break and melt for sin as sometimes they have done. Is it not a great trouble to you Christians to find these changes? You have found your hearts melt and break, now you cannot find them breaking and melting as heretofore.

It is the Promise of the *Covenant*, *I will take away the heart of stone, and give a heart of flesh.* Now if it be the work

Ezek. 36. 26.

of Divine Grace to take away the heart of stone (as certain it is (there is much of that heart of stone remaining in us any further than Divine Grace is put forth in us to soften our hearts) then the Saints want mollifying Grace to break their hearts under the sense of sin. Sometimes a little sin will break our hearts and affect our consciences, at other times a greater sin will not do it, therefore we want Divine Grace to make our consciences *tender* at all times.

5. The Saints are sensible of the need of *medicinal* or *healing* grace to heal the malignity and perverseness which they find lurking in their natures. There is a root of *pride*, of *passion*, of *envy*, a root of *frowardness* and *discontent*, a root of *murmuring* and *impatience*, a root of *covetousness*, which lurks in all our hearts, and the more experience we

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have

have of our own hearts, the more need we shall see we have of the Grace of God to heal these roots of sin that are thus lurking in us, *Psa. 41. 4. Heal my soul for I have sinned against thee.* We read of Ephraim that there was a root of covetousness and frowardness in him, *Isa. 57. 17. For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, there was one evil, viz. covetousness, I hid me and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart, there is another evil added to it, viz. frowardness and perverseness of spirit, his heart was very much out of frame, what doth God say? I have seen his waies and will heal him.* When our hearts are froward and perverse, nothing but Divine Grace can set our hearts right.

We have many such roots of bitterness in us, Pride, Passion, Covetousness, Envy, Frowardness, Discontent, Murmuring, Impatience, and the like. Now we need Divine Grace, medicinal Grace to heal us.

6. The Saints are sensible of the need which they have of *powerful efficacious grace* to cause them to *believe* in Christ. *Draw me, that is, draw me to thy self in a way of believing, so some expound* it,

it, and they compare this Text with those words of our Saviour, *Joh. 6. 44.* *No man can come to me, except the Father which sent me, draw him.* There must be the drawing of Divine Grace before any person can come to Christ in a way of believing, so that we need efficacious Grace to draw us to come to Christ in a way of believing. Whatever we may think, there is naturally an opposition in our hearts against the way of believing. It is natural to every man to seek for a righteousness in himself. We were all born under the Covenant of Works, and we desire to live and abide under the Covenant of Works, and seek for a righteousness of our own, This is plain from that of the Jews, *Rom. 10. 3.* *They being ignorant of Gods righteousness, and what is this righteousness of God? imputed righteousness, the righteousness of God by Faith, as the Apostle calls it, Phil. 3. 9.* Now, saith he, *they being ignorant of Gods righteousness, went about to establish their own righteousness.* It is natural to every man to seek for a righteousness in himself, and he is loth to be beholding to the righteousness of another, so proud is the heart of man that he would not go out of himself for

happineſſe, therefore it is the power of Divine Grace that muſt take a man out of himſelf and from off his own bottom, to make him come to Chriſt. And as we need Divine Grace to help us to believe firſt of all, ſo we need the help of the ſame Grace to inable us to put forth every particular act of Faith. We have a clear Text for it, *Rom. 15. 13. Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, in believing,* that is the meaning. But how ſo? *Through the power of the Holy Ghoſt; to the end that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghoſt,* mark it, it is by the power of the Holy Ghoſt that we muſt abound in the acts of Faith, we cannot put forth one act of Faith without the power and ſpecial helps and aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt. Do we not find it a difficult thing to come to the ſpiritual apprehenſions of Chriſt? how hard do we find it to apprehend the perſon of Chriſt aright? how difficult is it to have right conceptions of the righteousneſſe of Chriſt, and of the Grace of Chriſt? Now Faith begins in the ſpiritual apprehenſion of Chriſt, *Joh. 6. 40. This is the will of him that ſent me, that every*  
*one*

one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life. There must be first *seeing* of the Son before there can be believing on him. *Spiritual apprehension* of Christ is the first thing in Faith, there must first be a spiritual apprehension of Christ before there can be an act of Faith upon Christ, therefore Paul prays that he might *know* Christ, Phil. 3. 10. That I may *know* him, &c. Now if we cannot so easily come to spiritual apprehensions of Christ, it is not so easie to act Faith upon him as we may think. Therefore the Saints need the power of efficacious Grace to cause them to believe; and the Apostle tells us, *Ephes. 6.* latter end, That there is the same power put forth to make us to believe, as was put forth by God when he raised Christ from the dead.

7. The Saints are sensible of the need that they have of *preparing* or dispositive Grace, if I may so call it, to *prepare, incline,* and *dispose* their hearts to the things of God, *Psal. 10. 17.* *Thou wilt prepare their hearts to pray, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear. Thou wilt prepare their hearts to pray.* It is God that prepares the heart to *pray*; so in

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*Psal. 119. 39. Incline my heart to thy Testimonies.* The Saints are sensible of the need of the Grace of God to put a *new bent*, a *new bias* on their hearts. *Incline my heart to thy Testimonies*; our hearts are oftentimes out of frame, very much *unsuited* to spiritual things, and holy souls are sensible of the need of Divine Grace to bring them into frame, to dispose them and bring them into a temper fit for the duties God calls them to, *Heb. 13. 20, 21. The God of peace make you perfect in every good work*, that is, *adapt, frame, dispose* you to every good work. Oh the more experience we have of our own hearts, the more need we shall find we have of Divine Grace to bring our hearts into frame, and keep them in frame.

8. The Saints are sensible of the need they have of *over-powering* and *conquering* Grace to conquer and overcome the reluctancy that is in their wills against the Divine Will. When Gods Will thwarts and crosses our wills, our wills are apt to reluctate and make head against Gods Will, therefore holy souls are sensible of the need of Grace to overcome that rebellion and opposition that is in their wills against the Divine Will.

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Will. O it is the mighty power of the Grace of God that makes a man lay aside his own will, and his own *private affections*; nothing but Grace can make a man do this, every man by nature is wedded to his own will, and nothing but the Grace of God can take a man off from his own private will, and his own private affection. When our Saviour had foretold his sufferings, *Peter* could not bear this, his will began to reluctate, *Matth. 16. 22. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee; Lord, this shall not be unto thee.* When Gods Will thwarts ours, our wills are apt presently to rebel, and to make head against it: Therefore holy souls are sensible of the need of Divine Grace to overcome the reluctancy that they find in their wills against the Will of God.

9. The Saints are sensible of the need of *preserving* Grace to preserve and keep them from falling into *gross* and *scandalous* sins, *Jude* vers. 24. *To him that is able to keep you from falling, falling, how? falling foully, falling scandalously.* It is God that is able to keep us from falling, we are not able to keep our selves. It is the Divine power

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that keeps us from falling foully and scandalously, we cannot keep our selves. We have another Saint professing his inability in this point, *Psal. 17. 5. Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not*; as much as if he should say, I shall soon tread awry, I shall easily be overtaken by some gross sin, if thou dost not uphold me, if thou dost not keep me. *Psal. 19. 13. Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins*, as much as if he should say, I am prone enough of my self to fall into *presumptuous sins*, it is thy grace alone can keep me back from them. Alas, if we should trust to our own strength we should soon find how weak it is; there is not the holiest soul, but would fall into scandalous sins, did not Divine Grace keep him.

10. And lastly, The Saints are sensible of the need they have of *fixing* and *establishing* Grace to keep their hearts *fixt* and *constant* in the waies of God, *Psal. 86. 11. Unite my heart to fear thy name*; *unite my heart*, when this holy man prays to have his heart *united*, that shews he found his heart prone to many *excursions*, his affections were scattered abroad unto variety of objects, therefore doth he pray to have his heart *united*



to God, that so he might adhere to God *only, firmly, inseparably, truly*. It is very hard for us to keep our hearts alwaies close to God, every poor thing is apt to distract them and turn them aside, therefore holy souls, that walk with God, see a necessity of Divine Grace to fix their hearts, that they may cleave to the Lord firmly and inseparably.

Is it so, that *holy souls* are most sensible of the need they have of Divine Grace? hence may we learn, that they who magnifie and cry up the *power* of *nature* and mans *free will*, and *decry* the necessity of Divine Grace do little understand their own hearts, and the reason is, because this crying up of the power of nature and mans own ability and strength, is manifestly contrary to the experience of the Saints in all ages, therefore it was well observed by one, That the principles of some men, who do cry up Free-will, they are contrary to the *common sense* and *experience* of all the faithful. Some men teach us that we have a power to believe: the Saints experience in all ages tells them that they have no power. Certainly *Paul* had as much of the power of Free-will in him as another man, and yet he saith,  
*we*

*we have not sufficiency of our selves to think a good thought, what less than a holy thought? and yet we have no less than an Apostle, after all the Grace he had received, that tells us, that he had not sufficiency of himself to think a good thought. Some men make their boast of their own strength and sufficiency, but how contrary is this to the language of the Saints in Scripture? The Saints with one accord in Scripture cry out, Draw us, quicken us, incline us, unite our hearts, order our steps in thy waies, what are all these expressions but a holy confession of their own insufficiency? therefore they who cry up the power of nature and mans Free-will are not to be credited in what they say, because it is contrary to the sense and suffrage of the Church in all Ages.*

*This should teach us in the*

*Use 2.*

*2. Place great humility; If the Church here prays to be drawn, Oh then let us all labour to be sensible of the need we have of Divine Grace. The more sensible we are of the need of grace, the more humble shall we be in our selves, the greater dependance shall we have upon Christ, the more shall we seek to God for Grace, and the more we shall*

shall give to God the glory of the Grace which we receive from him: whereas on the contrary, the more we abound in the sense of our own *fullness* and *sufficiency*, and the less sense we have of our need of Divine Grace, the more liable we are to fall. Take it for a certain truth, that none are more likely to be deserted of God, and left to themselves than those who are presumptuous of their own strength, and unsensible of the need they have of Divine Grace, for God *resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble*, 1 Pet. 5. 5. When we do not keep up the sense of our need of Grace, then God leaves us to our selves, and shews us what we are, and what we can do, or rather what we cannot do, without the help of Divine Grace, and God leaving us to fall one way or other, makes us see what need we have of his Grace. Therefore as we would not have God desert us, and leave us to our selves, let us keep up a constant sense of the need of his Grace; and that not only as to some things, but as to *every thing*, *without me*, saies our Saviour, *you can do nothing*, he doth not say *you can do nothing* at all, not *one thing*, but a diminution of our own strength.

is that which undoes us. We presume upon our own gifts and Grace received, upon our own sufficiency and resolution, and are not sensible of our need of Grace for every thing, and hence it is that we go forth in the confidence of our own strength and ability, and neglect our dependance on Christ, and then we have experience oftentimes how greatly we miscarry. But we shall find it to be true, that our greatest perfection lies in this, to go intirely out of our selves, and to have the most intire dependance upon God for every thing; the highest perfection a Christian can attain to in this life, is to go wholly out of himself, and to have an intire dependance upon God for every thing.

*The end of the Fifteenth Sermon.*

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SERMON

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# SERMON XVI.

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Solomon's Song, 1. 4.

*Draw me, we will run after thee.*

**I** Now proceed to the second thing, and that is, to shew what the sense is the Saints have of their need of *divine grace*.

I shall but touch upon this in a few words, and then come to the reasons, to shew, How it comes to pass that holy souls have this *sense* of the need of Divine Grace.

1. What that *sense* is that the Saints have of their need of Divine Grace.

1. They have an *awakened* and *lively* sense of their need of Grace. The experience they have of their own hearts makes them to see their need of the Grace of God. They find by sad experience that they are overtaken by many sins contrary to the deliberate purpose of their wills ; they find also they come very short of doing and performing that good

good they have a mind to do and perform, *To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not*, saies Paul, *Rom. 7.* Now this inspection the Saints have into their hearts and lives, keeps up in them an awakened sense of the need which they have of Divine Grace. The sad experience of what they find and feel in themselves, will not suffer them to be ignorant of the need of Divine Grace.

2. As they have an awakened and lively sense of the need of Divine Grace, so they have a continued sense of the need of Divine Grace. The sense of the need they have of the help of Grace it runs throughout their whole lives; the elder any one grows in *Christianity*, the more experience he hath attained unto, the more sensible he will be of his need of Divine Grace. *Austin* after he had written many Books concerning the Grace of God, one of his last Books was concerning the *good of perseverance*. The Saints after they have received much Grace from God, yet they are sensible they need this Grace also, that they may persevere and hold out to the end.

*De Bono Perse-*  
*verantie.*

We come now to the grounds of the Point, How

How is it that the Saints have this sense in themselves, this ~~awakened~~ *sense*, this *continued sense* of the need of Divine Grace, what are the Reasons of it?

There are three or four Reasons to be given of it.

1. The Saints are sensible of a fountain of sin within them, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death, and it is sin that dwelleth in me*, Rom. 7. 20. Now the Saints being so sensible of original sin that dwelleth in them, are also sensible that this evil root that is within them, is apt to betray them upon all occasions. *In me, that is, in my flesh dwelleth no good thing*, Rom. 7. 18. Corrupt nature that is in us will never incline us to good: But it is prone enough to incline us to evil. When Temptations from without are wanting, our own hearts are prone enough to tempt us to evil, *Jam. 1. 14. But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and inticed*. If there were no tempter from without, there is corruption enough in every one of our hearts to seduce us to sin. Now the experience which the Saints have of the treachery and deceitfulness of their own hearts,

1. Reason the Saints have of the sense of the need of Divine Grace.

Jer. 17. 9.

hearts, this makes them to see the constant need which they have of Divine Grace. *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.* Wherein doth the *deceitfulness* of the heart discover it self? Truly, among other things the *deceitfulness* of the heart discovers it self in this, that when sin seems to be fast asleep, when it doth not stir at all, when it seems to be as a thing dead and extinct, yet upon the least occasion it awakens and puts it self forth again with fresh life and vigour. Now this proclivity and readiness that is in the heart to sin, that upon every occasion the heart is apt to bend and incline towards sin, this makes the Saints sensible of the constant need they have of Divine Grace.

2. Reason the Saints have of the sense of the need of Divine Grace.

2. As the Saints are sensible of a *fountain of sin* in them, so they are sensible how unable they are to withstand the *impetuous motions* of corruption that arise from the root of sin in them. Oh do we not find oftentimes corrupt nature to bear us down like a mighty Torrent? When the Lord reproved *Jonah* for his *peevishness* and *fretfulness* because of the gourd, *Dost thou well to be angry?* what doth *Jonah* answer, *I do well*



*well to be angry to the very death.* Here was a Prophet, no less than a Prophet blown up by a passion, yea by a passion for a very little thing, as we would think, such are we when we are left by Divine Grace. How often is it thus with us that some violent affection hurries us, and transports us beyond all bounds, a poor passion blows us up, and we know not how to withstand it: this makes the Saints see their daily need of Divine Grace; unless Divine Grace set bounds to our passions and affections, whither will our passions and affections hurry us? Now the experience the Saints have of the impetuous motions of sin within them, this makes them see their need of Divine Grace.

3. The Saints are sensible of their *impotency* and *utter inability* of themselves to do any thing that is good, 2 Cor. 3.5. *Not that we are sufficient of our selves to think any thing, but our sufficiency is of God.* Holy souls find by experience that they cannot command *good thoughts* or *holy affections*. Is it not thus with you sometimes? do not you say in the secret retirements of your souls, O that it were with me as in the daies of old, O that it were with me as sometimes it was, O

3. Reason the Saints have of the sense of the need of Divine Grace.

that I had such apprehensions of God, such affections towards God as sometimes I had ! Now the Saints finding by experience that they cannot command holy thoughts and holy affections, nor perform any thing that is spiritually good, this sense of their own *impotency*, makes them see their need of Divine Grace.

4. Reason the Saints have of the sense of the need of Divine Grace.

4. And lastly, The Saints have experience of very *different frames* in themselves, when they are acted by Divine Grace, and when they are left to themselves.

When they are acted by Divine Grace, then they get above this world, then they can mount up aloft, then they can delight themselves greatly in God, then they can take up their rest and satisfaction in God ; But at other times when they are left to themselves, and Divine Grace doth not so act them and assist them, they experience no such thing, but on the contrary they find their hearts flat, dead, carnal, and too like to other men, groveling in this world : this is the difference holy souls find in themselves, and all is according to the accessles and recesses of Divine Grace. Now the Saints finding that it is not at all times alike with them,

them, but that it is far otherwise with them when they are acted and assisted by Divine Grace, and when they have not the same assistance of Divine Grace, this makes them see their constant need of the Grace of God.

And so I have done with the doctrinal part: I come now to the Use and Application.

This is matter of *Reproof* to us that *Use* 1.  
we are no more sensible of the need of Divine Grace; we have a *self-fulness*, a *self-sufficiency*, we do not see the constant need we have of the Grace of God. Happy soul is he that seeth his constant need of Grace; but I am afraid there are few such to be found. The *Apostle* tells the *Corinthians*, *Ye are full, ye are rich, ye have reigned as Kings*, 1 Cor. 4. that is, ye are so in your own conceits, and apprehensions; it was not really so, but in their own opinion and conceit concerning themselves. Thus it is with many Professors, they are *full*, they are *rich*, they are *Kings* in their own apprehensions, they are come to the *top* of *Christianity*. But it is much to be feared that mens greatest *supposed perfection* will be found to be their *greatest imperfection*.

Certainly holy men that have walked

with God, have counted it their greatest perfection to see their need of the Grace of God. But alas we see no such need of Grace; we think we are full, we are apt to think we have all that need be desired. It was the charge which Christ brought against the Church of *Laodicea*, *Rev. 3. 17.* *Thou sayest, I am rich and increased with good, and have need of nothing.* O but it was but her saying so, it was not really so, for whereas she said she was *rich* and *increased* with goods and *wanted nothing*, she was indeed really *poor*, and *blind*, and *wretched*, and *miserable*, and *naked*, so our Saviour tells her. Such is our *pride* and *self-conceit*, that when we are most *poor*, we then think our selves to be most rich, and when we want all things, we think we abound in all things.

But how doth it appear that we have not a due *sense* of the want of Divine Grace?

There are two or three demonstrations that may evince and make it clear to us.

1. That we are apt to presume much, and have high conceits of our own attainments, *Gal. 6. 3.* *If any man think himself something, 1 Cor. 8. 2.* *If a man think he knoweth any thing.* We are apt

apt to think that we have attained much; that we are very *knowing persons*, that little more can be added to us than we do know, than what we have received. Now these high conceits of our selves, are a certain sign of our self-fulness, and that we do not see our need of Divine Grace. He that thinks that he is well stored already, he that thinks he hath provision enough of his own, will never be a *beggar* at the door of Grace.

2. A clearer demonstration yet is this, that we feel so little of a *spiritual hunger* and *thirst* in our souls after Grace. The sense of want causeth hunger and begets thirst. Hunger and thirst do properly arise from the sense of want. When nature is sensible of some want, this causeth hunger and thirst. Now that we do not feel our souls *prick'd* with a spiritual hunger and thirst after Grace, it is a sign we are not so sensible of our want of Grace as we ought to be, *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled*, Matth. 5. 6. There must be a spiritual hunger and thirst after Grace, as ever we expect to receive much Grace; but how little is it of this spiritual hunger that we feel in our selves? We are soon sensible of the want of other

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things.

things. If our bodies be but a little distempered, we are soon sensible of the want of health; if we are in wants, streights, and necessities, we are soon sensible of the want of supplies. O but how rarely are we sensible of the want of Divine Grace, of the want of Faith? Faith to believe in Christ, Faith to believe the Promises? How rare is it that we are sensible of the want of love to God, of the want of holy affections, of the want of brokenness of heart for sin, hatred against sin? and the like. We have a quick sense of other wants; but is our sense so quick when we are under spiritual wants? That our hunger and thirst is no more vehement after Grace, that we feel no more keenness and sharpness in our appetites after Divine Grace, it is a certain sign we are not so sensible of our need of Grace as we ought to be.

3. Another sign that we do not find the want of Grace, is, that we do not see a greater need of the *ordinances* and of the *means* of Grace. If we saw a need of Grace it self, it is reasonable to suppose, we should see a greater need of the means by which God is wont to convey Grace. The ordinances are the *conduit-pipes*, the *ordinary* means, by which

which God is wont to convey grace to the souls of his people : For, *Faith comes by hearing, and hearing is of the word of God* ; therefore that we are so *indifferent* as to our attendance on the Ordinances, and do not find that *need* of them in our own souls, it is a certain sign we are not so sensible of the want of divine grace as we ought to be. The *holiest* men who have had the greatest sense of their need of grace, have been most sensible of their need of the Ordinances to preserve and keep alive grace within them. Hence is that of *David*, *Psal. 63. 1. My soul thirsteth for thee, my soul longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty Land, why so? That I may see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the Sanctuary.* He had found the power of divine grace put forth in his soul, in the Ordinances, and that experience he had of the grace of God that had appeared to him in the Ordinances, caused him the more to thirst after them. Holy souls see a need not of one Ordinance only, but of *every* Ordinance, for they know that there is not any *one* means of grace appointed in vain. I take it for a certain Truth, that so far as a man comes up to spirituality and to any growth in

Rom. 10. 17.

Christianity, the more he will see his need of *every* Ordinance. There is no Ordinance of God in vain. The infinitely wise God hath not appointed any one means of grace that our souls do not need; therefore holy souls see their need not only of *some* Ordinances, but of *all* the Ordinances; and as they see their need of every Ordinance, so they see their need of the frequent use of the Ordinances; and the reason is plainly this, the more grace a man hath, the more he is acquainted with the state of his own soul, and the more a man is acquainted with the state of his own soul, the more he sees the great defects that are in himself, and the sight of those defects in himself makes him prize all the waies and means whereby God is wont to communicate grace to his people. This is the true reason why holy souls see their need of the Ordinances. Now that we do not find such an appetite to the Ordinances, so as to bring us to them with that frequency, nor such a relish and savour in them, when we are present at them, it is a certain sign that we are not sensible of the want of grace, and it is our want of a sense of our need of grace that makes us so regardless of the Ordinances



nances as we are. It is far from an high attainment to sit loose to the Ordinances. They who do so, and do constantly neglect the Ordinances, give too great grounds of suspicion, whether they have any grace or no; for the more grace any man hath, the more he seeth his need of all the means of grace.

The second Use is by way of *Exhortation*, to *exhort* us to maintain and keep up a deep and constant sense of the need we have of *divine* grace. It is the counsel which Christ gives to the Church of *Laodicea*, *Rev. 3. 18. I counsel thee to buy of me Gold tried in the fire, that thou maist be rich, and white rayment, that thou maist be clothed, that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear, and anoint thine eye with eye-salve that thou maist see.* She thought she was rich and increased with goods and wanted nothing, Christ tells her, it was not so as she imagined, but that she was *poor*, and *wretched*, and *miserable*, and blind, and naked, therefore he exhorts her to keep up a sense of her need of grace, *I counsel thee to buy of me, &c.* That is therefore to be the Exhortation unto us, that we would labour to keep up a constant sense of our need of *divine* grace. Now for  
a few

a few *Motives* to quicken us hereunto.

*Motive 1.* 1. Consider, This is the way to prepare us to receive most *grace* from God. The more sensible we are of the need of grace, the more are we prepared to receive grace from God. For, *God fills the hungry with good things.* Humility

Luke 1. 53.

*Vas Gratiarum.*

is, as one calls it, the *Vessel* that receives and takes in all other grace; by *humility* we are prepared to receive all other grace at the hand of God. Now Humility ariseth from a sense of our own wants and indigency, the more sensible we are of our own wants and weaknesses, the more humble we shall be, and the more humble we are, the more are we prepared to receive divine grace, for *God gives grace to the humble.*

*Motive 2.* The second Motive is this, Not to be sensible of the need of divine grace, is an argument of *great security*; for what is security? Security is when a man thinks himself free from danger; then is a man secure when he is apprehensive of no danger; now, then is a man in the greatest danger, when he is least apprehensive of danger. A man is never in greater danger of falling into some gross and scandalous sin, than when he is most secure. Our Saviour bids us to *watch*

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and pray that we enter not into temptation: Matth. 26. 41. this plainly intimates, that if we do not *watch* and pray, we may soon fall into Temptation; now if we are not sensible of the need of divine grace, but are secure, and think all is well, we shall neither *watch* nor *pray*, and so, soon be surprized and overcome by Temptation.

The third *Motive* is this, Nothing *Motive 3.* will *provoke* God sooner to *desert* us in point of grace, and to leave us to our selves, than for us not to keep up a sense of the need we have of his grace. If we think we have a *self-fulness*, and a *self-sufficiency*, this causeth God to leave us to our selves, that so we may see what we are without his grace. We read how God left *Hezekiah* to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart; we 2 Chron. 32. 31. do not presently see all that is in our hearts, till God withdraw his grace from us. Am I a *Dog*, said he, that I should 2 Kings 8. 13. do so and so? so are we apt to think within our selves, is it possible that ever I should be inclined to such a sin and such a corruption? Now when we presume on our own strength and sufficiency, the Lord leaves us, and then we soon see that superfluity of naughtiness that is in our hearts, we see that sin in us

us that we little thought had been in us.

4. And lastly, That we may keep up the sense of our need of divine grace, Consider, the more sensible we are of the need of grace, the more sensible we shall be of the help and assistance of divine grace when God affords it to us, and so God will have the glory of his own grace. Gods design is to have the glory of his grace in all things. Now the more sensible we are of the want of grace, the more sensible we shall be of the help and assistance of divine grace when God affords it to us.

But here it may be inquired, What ought we to do that we may keep up a constant sense of the need of divine grace? I shall propound a few means to help us herein.

1. Would we see the need of divine grace, let us be much conversant in the *study* of our own hearts. The work of a *Christian* lies *mainly* and *principally* in two things, In the *study* of Christ, and in the *study* of his *own heart*; the *study* of our *own hearts* will make us see the need we have of Christ and his grace. He that studys his own heart, will see his constant need of Christ and divine grace; the more we study our own hearts and

and are acquainted with them, the more clearly shall we see the natural *propension* that is in us unto evil, we shall also see our *impotency* and *inability* to what is good, yea not only our *impotency* and *inability* to what is good, but our averfeness and indisposition to what is good, also our *instability* and *inconstancy* in what is good, and also a *proneness* and *readiness* in us to comply with temptation upon all occasions. All this will shew us the need of divine grace. The more we are acquainted with our own hearts, the more shall we see how hard and difficult a thing it is to get them into a spiritual frame, and when we have got them into that frame, to keep them in a spiritual frame. So unsuitable are our hearts to spiritual things, that it is hard to get them into a *spiritual* and *heavenly* frame, and when they are set a little right towards God, they are *unstable* as water, and soon fly off again: these things plainly shew us the need of divine grace. Let us *examine* our own hearts, and see whether they cannot set their seal to the truth of these things, and if so, then may we see our constant need of divine grace.

2. We ought to consider our frequent *returns* and *relapses* into the same sins, yea

yea into the same sins after repentance for them; for though a regenerate person doth not ordinarily relapse into the same gross sins often, *He that is born of God doth not commit sin*, 1 Joh. 3. 10. that is, a regenerate person doth not *ordinarily* and *familiarly* fall into gross sins, he may be *surprized* and *overtaken* with a gross sin, so *David* and other Saints have been, but a regenerate son doth not often relapse into the same *gross sin*; but a regenerate person may relapse into sins of infirmity and such as we have reason to account great infirmities. How often do fits of Pride, of Passion, of Unbelief, of Murmuring, of Impatience return upon us, yea after we have been humbled for these things, and after these things have cost us dear? this shews us the great corruption of our nature, and the constant need we have of the grace of God; for if we be so prone to fall, and so ready to be intangled and overcome with Temptation upon every occasion; though we have mourned over, and prayed against the sin we have been overtaken with, this shews us our constant need of divine grace.

3. To help us to see the need of divine grace, let us Consider, That the  
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least *suspension* of *divine grace* makes a present *decay* or *withering* in our souls. Let the Sun withdraw and absent it self, *darkness* and *cold* presently succeeds: cut off the beam from the Sun, the beam cannot maintain it self, the beam is maintained by a constant influx and supply of light from the Sun the fountain of light: so is it in this case, If *divine grace* withdraw it self, our souls grow dark and dead immediately. Let the influences of *divine grace* be but suspended, that activity and vigour of grace that was in our souls before, doth presently vanish, *Joh. 15. 4. As the branch cannot bring forth fruit unless it abide in the Vine, no more can ye, unless ye abide in me.* In the same moment that the branch is severed from the stock, it begins to wither and die immediately: No sooner do we sever our selves (as it were) from Christ, by *neglecting* our *dependance* on Christ, but we lose our greenness and freshness immediately. It is true, the *radical* union, if I may so call it, which is between Christ and a soul, that alwaies remains, for once *in Christ* and ever *in Christ*, the *radical* and *fundamental* union that is between Christ and a true Believer is indissoluble; but

but if we do not maintain and keep up the life and Spirit of this union (if I may so express it) by actual dependance on Christ, present *decays* and *witherings* will certainly ensue. Observe it in your selves, and you will find it true, when you neglect to have recourse to Christ, and have not that intimate dependance upon him for grace; you shall find that your souls are not so lively and vigorous in the waies of God, as when your dependance upon him is kept up high and strong. The least suspension of actual grace from Christ laies us under present witherings and decays.

*The end of the Sixteenth Sermon.*

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SERMON



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## SERMON XVII.

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Solomon's Song, 1. 4.

*Draw me, we will run after thee.*

**T**HAT which we were last treating of, was to shew what *Means* we ought to use, that we may keep up the constant sense of the need of Divine grace.

Two or three have been already mentioned.

1. We should be much versed in the study of our own hearts.

2. If we would keep up the sense of our need of divine grace, we ought to consider our frequent returns and relapses into the same sins, even after repentance for them.

3. Consider that the least suspension of divine grace, makes a present decay and withering in our spirits. We now proceed to a fourth *Means of Help*.

4. To make us sensible of the need of divine grace, Consider, We cannot *live* upon *grace already received*; all our

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former attainments in grace are not sufficient to carry us out to act spiritually, without new supplies of grace, 1 *Phil.*

1. 9. *This shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ*; the Greek word properly signifies an additional supply. There must be an additional supply of grace and strength to all the former grace which we have received, to make us to act spiritually. It is not enough that we have *habitual* grace, but we must have *actual* grace to excite and draw forth the habits of grace to act in us, *Cant.* 4. 16. *Awake, O North wind, and come thou South, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow forth.* Though we have habits of grace in us, which are here compared to *Spices*, yet we must have *actual* grace, *fresh gales* and influences of the Spirit to draw forth the habits of grace into exercise, otherwise our *Graces* will be like unbeaten *Spices* which send forth no favour. And it is not enough that we have *actual* grace at one time, but we must have *fresh gales* of the Spirit upon all occasions to carry us forth with *new vigour* in the waies of God. A Ship that hath a fair gale of wind, for the present, to fill its Sails, makes way  
again,

amain, but it can run its course no longer than that gust of wind lasts; when the gust is gone, the Ship soon flags and slackens in its course: Thus it is with us, when we are under fresh gales of the Spirit, we can make some speed and good progress in the ways of God, but when the gale & gust is gone we are soon becalmed, we many times trust in our own affections, we trust in our own enlargements in duty, and because we have found such affections at one time, we think we can command the same affections again; and because we have found such and such enlargements in duty, we think we can do so still. But we ought to know and consider, that all these affections and enlargements are but the *effects* of *divine grace*. It is the *grace* of *God* that quickens our affections and enlargeth our hearts. Now if we trust in the effect, and not in the cause, we shall soon find our selves greatly deceived. When *Sampsons* locks were *shorn*, he thought to go out and *shake himself*, as at other times, but he wist not that *the Spirit of the Lord was departed from him*, Judg. 16. 20. Thus it is with us, because we have such quickenings and enlargements at one time, we think we can go forth in

the strength of these things, and do as formerly we have done; but we do not consider that unless we have the same presence of divine grace to act us now as acted us heretofore, we cannot act as then we did.

5. To make us sensible of the need of divine grace, let us consider, We cannot live upon our *former comforts*, and the former experiences we have had of Gods love. Although we have had some assurance of Gods love, although we have had some experience of spiritual comforts, although there hath been such things passed between God and our souls, as that we would think we should never lose the comfort of them: yet without fresh incomes of divine grace, we cannot bear up in a time of extremity. I would not be mistaken here, I know a *Christian* lawfully may and ought to make use of all the experiences he hath had of Gods love, but if he trust in these, and if he think he need not *present actual grace* to help and support him in a time of extremity, all his experiences may fail him: and the reason is plain, because God may suffer a *veil* to be drawn over all a mans former comforts and experiences, that he shall have little

little use of them for the present. Our *Saviour* himself (which is the highest instance that can be given) had a veil drawn over all his comforts; he had been inured to the sight of God all his life, he had walkt in the light of his Fathers countenance all his daies, yet all of a sudden, he cries out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.* It is true he was never deserted in point of grace, he had the presence of the Spirit to act him alwaies in a way of *obedience*, yet there was a veil drawn over all his *comforts*, there was a suspension of comfort and manifestation. Therefore since it is possible that there may be a veil drawn over all our comforts, it is good for us to pray for a constant supply of *divine influences* to support and comfort us.

I remember a passage of an holy man, and one of great experience in the waies of God, *I find it best*, saith he, *when I come to greatest heights of peace and assurance, to mind what is my present duty, otherwise I meet with a cloud.* Truly if we trust in our own attainments in grace, and upon the comfort and experience we have had already of Gods love, and do not maintain con-

stant dependance upon him for new supplies of grace, we may soon meet with a cloud, for God loves to keep us in dependance.

6. To shew us the constant need that we have of divine grace, let us take in this great Consideration, Nothing but *present actual grace* can carry us through our greatest extremities. When it comes to a time of great affliction, when we are cast into great streights and difficulties, when we are brought to a *dying hour*, nothing but present actual grace can carry us through these things: although former experiences, although grace received may be of some use to us, yet over and above all these things we must have present actual grace to carry us through a time of great extremity. I do many times think with my self what may be of greatest use to a man to carry him through a *dying hour*, how a man may be best prepared for a dying hour; and truly there may be several things that may be of use to a Christian this way, I shall hint at a few briefly.

1. One thing may be, The *renewing* of a mans former *evidences*, the consideration of the more *eminent actings* of grace that have been in his soul.

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There is no *Christian* that hath walkt with God for any considerable time, but upon reflection, he may remember some more eminent and remarkable actings of Gods grace in him, concerning which he may say, This, if any thing, was the grace of God in me: this may be of some use to him.

2. Another thing may be the remembrance of what hath passed between God and a man in his whole life. Many of the Saints can say, at such and such times there were such passages between God and their souls which they have reason never to forget; when they tasted and felt such things, they thought those were evidences of the love of God to them.

3. A third thing which I look upon to be of great moment is this, The setting of some special promises before the eye of a mans soul, upon which he may be able to venture his soul: God hath said, *He that believes on his Son shall not be condemned:* again, *He that believes on his Son shall have eternal life.* Now to lay some clear certain great and fundamental promises before the eye of a mans soul, and to venture his Soul upon the bottom of these promises, is one main way to help a man in a dying hour. It is said of

Joh. 3. 18.  
Joh. 6. 40.

the *ancient Saints*, *They all dyed in Faith*, not having received the Promise, Heb. 11. 13. They all dyed in Faith, that is, they took Gods Word for their Salvation ; we must all venture our Salvation upon the bottom of Gods Word, we must be able to single out some Word of God, and say, Upon the bottom of this Word I can venture my soul, venture my eternal estate : These are of good use to us in a dying hour.

4. But that which I take to be the *principal means*, above all other, is this, To pray for present actual grace, to carry us through a dying hour. Though the remembrance of former experiences, the remembring what God hath bestowed upon us, the setting the Promises before the eye of our souls may be of great use to us, yet that which is necessary, over and above all this, is actual grace in a dying hour : For neither the grace we have received, nor former experiences, nor the promises will be of use to us, unless we have actual grace to help us to make use of them. Therefore I conceive that here doth the main skill of a *Christian* lie, if we would be carryed through a *dying hour*, we should pray much that God would not desert us in point of grace,



grace, that he would not desert us in that hour, but *own* us, *stand by* us, and *assist* us in that hour; *Though I walk,* saith David, *through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me,* Psal. 23. 4. Therefore our great prayer should be, that we may have actual grace to uphold us in the *difficulties* of life, and to carry us through the *agonies* of death: The Promise is, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.* Now we ought to put this, and such like *promises* in suit, that so we may never be deserted in point of grace; and if we have the constant presence of divine grace with us, that will carry us through death it self.

Heb. 13. 5.

And thus I have dispatched that first Doctrine, viz. *Holy souls are sensible of the need which they have of divine grace.* The

Doct. 2. Second Doctrine is this, *The sense of the need which we have of divine grace, should make us pray much for the drawings of divine grace: Draw me, and we will run after thee.* Her praying for *drawing*, supposeth her want and need of drawing, and her *praying for these drawings of divine grace*

grace speaks the greatness and earnestness of her desires after them.

Here we have two things to speak to ;

1. To shew what these *drawings* of divine grace are. And

2. *How*, and by *what means* it is that God is wont to draw the souls of his people to himself.

1. What these drawings of divine grace are, I shall speak to this,

1. In *General* ; and then shew you how it is that God draws the souls of his people to himself, or by what means it is he doth this.

1. What these drawings of divine grace are. These drawings of divine grace, I take to be the *quickenings* or *excitations* of the Spirit of God, whereby the soul is elevated and raised above its natural pitch, and carryed forth with life and vigour in the waies of God.

God is said to *draw* those, *whom he doth efficaciously move or stir up to do any thing*. When God doth stir up, and effectually move a person to do a thing, then he is said to *draw* him ; hence it is said in *Judg. 7. 4. I will draw unto thee Sisera the Captain of Jabins Army*, that is, I will *move* him, and *incline* him to come out against thee. Now these

*drawings*

*Quo efficaciter  
mover & impel-  
lit ad aliquid  
agendum.*

*drawings* of divine grace do suppose several things.

1. They suppose some *distance* and *estrangement* that there is between God and us ; if there were not some distance and estrangement between God and us, we should not need divine grace to draw us near to him: therefore when the *Church* prays here to be *drawn*, it is to be supposed that she found some *distance* and estrangement that was between God and her.

2. These *drawings* suppose some *deadness*, *indisposition*, and *unaptness* in our selves to *move* towards God. If we were not *dead* and backward to come to God, what need we divine grace to draw us to him?

3. These drawings suppose our *weakness* and *inability* to move towards God. *No man can come to me*, saith our Saviour, *except the Father which hath sent me draw him*, Joh. 6. 44. If therefore we need *divine grace* to *enable* us to *come*, it is a sign that we cannot *come* of our selves: these *drawings* are a sign of our *infirmity*.

4. They suppose an *act* of Gods *power*, and the exerting of *efficacious grace* to *enable* us to move towards God.

*Drawing*

ἐνεργῶν τὸ  
ἐλπί.

*Drawing* is an act of power, Job 24. 22. He draweth also the mighty with his power, Psal. 110. 4. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power. It is an act of power to make us willing, who are naturally unwilling. God of unwilling, makes us willing. It is God that works in us to will, Phil. 2. 13. It is God that efficaciously works in us the very act of willing: the act of willing spiritually proceeds from the energy or effectual working of Gods power. It is true we have a natural faculty to will; but to will spiritually, this is the effect of Gods power and grace in us, and it is God that works in us so to will. Thus have I shewn the nature of these drawings in General. But the

2. Thing is that which is of greatest moment, *How* is it that God draws the souls of his people to himself; by what means is it that God thus draws us?

God draws the souls of his people to himself several waies.

1. By setting his excellencies before the eye of the Soul, *Draw me*, saith the Church here, how is that? How would she be drawn? *Draw me* by setting thine excellencies before me, by presenting thine amiableness unto me, this

this seems clearly intended by what follows in this *Verse*, *The King hath brought me into his Chambers* : the *Chambers* are the place where the *King* manifests his *presence*, there he is to be *seen*, the Church therefore prays to be drawn by being admitted to a sight and view of Christ, by having a prospect of his excellency given to her. This is certain, nothing is so attractive to the soul as the sight of Gods excellency. If we consult our own experience we shall find it true, one great cause of all our damps and deadnells is, that we have lost the sight of God that sometimes we have had, we have not that *sight* and *sense* of the divine excellency that sometimes we have had. Our *affections* cannot rise higher than our *apprehensions* ; if therefore we have lost those *clear* and lively *apprehensions* we have had of *God* and *Christ*, it is no wonder we have lost our affections towards him. When we have clear apprehensions of God and Christ, then we see a *surpassing glory* in that *object* above all others. One *true sight* of God makes all other things seem *little*, Isa. 33. 17. *Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty, thou shalt behold the Land which is very far off.* When  
once

once the soul hath a sight of God in his *beauty* and *glory*, all the creatures seem to be at a great *remove* and *distance*. The creatures seem to be but *little* when on<sup>e</sup> the Creator himself appears. This therefore is one way by which God draws us, by *presenting* himself before the eye of the soul. It is a great Text, *Joh. 14. 21. If any man love me, I will manifest my self to him.* The Word here used is a *precious* word, it hath much of heavenly sweetness in it to an holy soul that values Christs

ἐπαρίσσω αὐτῷ  
ἐμαυτὸν,  
Ei conspicendam  
exhibebo meips.

*presence, I will manifest my self.* Beza renders it, *I will expose my self to be seen by him.* I will offer my self (as it were) to his *view*, it is more than to *declare* or *manifest* simply, It is for a person to expose himself to *publick* view. As *Kings* and *Princes* have their times and seasons when they expose themselves to *publick view*; so Christ promiseth that he will make himself *visible*, as it were, he will expose himself

Pleran a: quasi  
humanis oculis  
aspectabilem de-  
claracionem.

to the view of his people. Beza conceives, that by this word is signified a *full declaration of a thing*, and *such* as if it were made *visible to the eye*. Not that it is a *corporal* sight, but a *spiritual* sight that is here spoken of: but the meaning

meaning is, that Christ will manifest himself so clearly to the eye of the soul, that the soul shall have (as it were) a view of him, an aspect of his glory, such at least as is suitable to the present state, wherein we walk by *Faith*, not by *Sight*. The **Criticks** in the Greek Tongue observe, that this word signifies to make a thing *clear*, *plain*, to shew a thing *clearly*, *openly* to another. I endeavour to explain this word as fully as may be, because it is so *precious* a word, *I will manifest my self to him*. Thus we read how *Joseph made himself known to his Brethren*: Thus Christ makes himself *known* to his people, by opening a little of his glory to them, and lets them know what he is; and *one beam* of the *divine Majesty* let in upon the soul, will soon attract and draw the soul to him.

ἐμφανίζω, φα-  
νεροποιῶ, ἐμ-  
φανίζω. φανερόν,  
ἔκδηλον.  
ἐμφανίζω σοι,  
φανερὸς σοι  
δείκνυμι,  
Phavorinus.

2. Christ *attracts* and *draws* souls to himself by the *merit* of his *sufferings*, Joh. 12. 32. *And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men after me*, that is, I, when I am lifted up upon the *Cross*, by the *merit* of my death and suffering will draw all men after me. It is a remarkable Scripture, and hath something of a *mysterious* signification in it, *Matth.*  
24. 28.

24. 28. *where the Carcass is, thither the Eagles will be gathered together.* The Eagle is famous for her quick and piercing eye; the Eagle by her piercing eye can see the Carcass at a great distance. An Eagle-eyed Christian can see that worth and excellency in a Crucified Christ which another cannot see, *My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed,* Joh. 6. 55. An Eagle-eyed Christian can discern that the flesh of Christ is the food and nourishment of souls. An Eagle-eyed Christian can perceive that it was in that flesh of his, that the Law was fulfilled, that the penalty of it was undergone, that divine justice was satisfied, and everlasting righteousness brought in, this attracts a believing soul to a Crucified Christ; *Christ Crucified is to some a stumbling-block,* and to others *foolishness*, 1 Cor. 1. but to those that understand the mystery of his death and sufferings, Christ is the *wisdom of God, and the power of God.* Hence is that of the Apostle, *I determine to know nothing save Jesus Christ and him Crucified;* so likewise Phil. 3. *I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss*

1 Cor. 1. 1.



*loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ.* Nothing will attract the heart more than the consideration of what Christ is, and the contemplation of what Christ hath done and suffered for us, the *name* of Christ is as *oyntment poured forth*, therefore do the *Virgins love him*, Cant. 1. 4. The more we know Christ in his personal excellency, and are acquainted with his grace as *Mediator*, the more will our hearts be attracted and drawn to him.

3. Christ draws us by the *discovery* of his *love* to us, Hos. 11. 4. *I drew them with the cords of a man, with bands of love*: Love is the *loadstone* of Love; we Love him *because he first loved us*, 1 Joh. 4. 19. Nothing so powerful to draw our hearts to the love of God as the *apprehension* of Gods Love to us. Now God doth sometimes drop and distill the sense of his love into the hearts of his people, and that draws them to Love him. Observe it in your selves, when the heart hath been very low, flat, and dead before, let the Lord but insinuate a little of his Love to the Soul, by some especial act of *kindness*, that will *raise* and *quicken* it immediately. Love is powerful and *attractive*, it

melts and dissolves the soul : if the soul be but in an ill *frame* before , let the Lord but manifest a little of his Love, and it is soon overcome by it, and put into a better frame.

4. God draw the souls of his people to himself by giving them *new* and *fresh* tastes of the excellencie of *spiritual* things. The Saints themselves do not alwaies relish that savour that is in the Word, nor taste that sweetness that is in the Promises ; I say, they do not alwaies taste *a like* sweetness in the Word, nor relish *a like* savour in it, as sometimes they have done ; and when they have lost that *taste* and *relish* that they had of spiritual things, this is that which makes their affections flat. If we had as *lively* tastes of spiritual things, as we have sometimes, our affections would not so often flag as they do, **1 Pet. 2. 2.** *As new born Babes desire the sincere milk of the word. If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.* Those that have once tasted of the *sweetness* and *goodness* of the word, cannot but still desire it as long as that taste remains with them. Consider, O Christian, what glory doth there appear in the Word at some times ? What excellency and

and heavenly sweetness in the promises at one time over and above what there doth at another? Now God allures and draws the hearts of his people, by giving in those tastes and relishes of spiritual things at some times, which they are not sensible of at other times. *No man, saith our Saviour, having drunk old wine, straightway desireth new, for he saith the old is better,* Luk. 5. 39. So when the soul hath newly tasted of the sweetness that is in God and Christ, when it hath tasted of the sweetness that is in the Promises, and in divine grace and heavenly consolations, it doth not presently grow fond of the *world* and *worldly comforts*: the sweetness the soul hath tasted and experienced in heavenly and spiritual things, attracts the soul to Love and desire these things above all others. And we shall find it true in experience, That when we grow fond of other things, it is because we have lost those tastes of God and Christ and spiritual things, which sometimes we have had.

5. And lastly, The last thing I shall mention at present, is this, God attracts and draws the hearts of his people by giving them a little *sight* and *prospect*

of that *glory* which is above, 1 Cor. 2.9. *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entred into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him*; but saith the Apostle, *God hath revealed them unto us by his spirit*, that is, God hath revealed them to us in *part* by his Spirit. It is not possible that we should take in the Glory that is above, in our minds and conceptions, as it is in it self, but God gives some little *prelibations* and foretastes of it unto his people. Hence is it that we read of *the tasting of the good word of God*, and *tasting of the power of the world to come*, Heb. 6. 4, 5. It is possible that a man that is under a *common work* of the Spirit (for it is of such the Apostle there speaks) may have some *tastes* of the *glory* and *happiness* of heaven. I do not think that those that are meerly under a common work, and are said here to *taste of the heavenly gifts*, and of the *powers of the world to come*, that they have, or can have such *tastes* of the *sweetness*, *glory*, and *blestness* of heaven, as those have who are truly regenerate, and are under a *saving work*; but some apprehensions they may have of it, they may apprehend

hend it to be a state of *bliss* and *happiness*. A man that is under the common work of the Spirit may apprehend Heaven to be a place of freedom from all *misery* and trouble, and where he shall enjoy happiness and perfect bliss, and have all joy, peace, comfort, and satisfaction: such like *general apprehensions* of Heaven is all, I conceive, that a man under a *common work* doth usually attain unto. Now if a man that hath but a common work may go so far, then the Saints who have more than a common work, they that have divine and *saving illumination*, may apprehend much more of the glory of Heaven. The Saints who are *savingly enlightened*, may apprehend something of *this state*, as it consists in the *clear sight* and *vision* of God, in *intimate fellowship* and *communion* with God, in *perfect holiness*, and the like. Nothing doth more powerfully attract the soul than when something of the glory of the other world is set before it. Now God doth sometimes let down a corner of *Heaven*, as it were, into the souls of his people, and gives them in *transitu*, a little glimpse and glance of the glory that is above, and this makes all *present things* seem to be

*How or by what means God Draws us.*

but little things to them. *We look not, saith the Apostle, to the things which are seen, for they are temporal, but we look unto the things which are not seen, for they are eternal, 2 Cor. 4. 18.* When a man, by the eye of Faith, hath a little prospect of the *Heavenly Country*, and when he beholds the *perfect serenity*, the *tranquillity*, the *unchangeableness*, the *blessedness*, the *joy*, the *satisfaction*, the *delights* that are in that Country, this must needs attract and allure the soul to the desire and love of these things, because these things do far excel any thing that is to be found in this world. Who would not prefer an *unchangeable state* before a *changeable*? perfect serenity and tranquillity, before constant trouble? perfect joy and satisfaction, before a state of grief and sorrow? Therefore when the soul hath a little prospect, by Faith, of that blessed life and state that is above; this must needs attract the desires of the soul, to desire the happiness and blessedness of this state, infinitely above all other things, *In his presence is fulness of joy, at his right hand there are pleasures for evermore, Psal. 16. 11.* This is certain, the clearer apprehensions we have of the excellency

cellency of the *divine presence*, the more shall we thirst and long after it; this is evident from the Apostle Paul, 2 Cor. 5. 8. *We are confident and willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord*; we delight most to be present with the Lord: as much as if he should say, we are at the present *confined* to the body, we are as prisoners in the body; But that we could take most delight in, that which would be most *acceptable* to us, is, to be *absent* from the body, and *present* with the Lord; the thoughts and apprehensions we have of the *divine presence*, makes it most delightful to us to be *absent from the body, and present with the Lord*. Thus God by letting down something of the glory of the *heavenly Country*, and giving the soul a little apprehension what the *excellency* and *ravishing sweetness* of the *divine presence* is like to be, doth attract the souls of his people to himself.

εὐδοκίμῳ  
μᾶλλον.

Gratius est nobis.  
bis. Beza.

The end of the Seventeenth Sermon.

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# SERMON XVIII.

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Solomon's Song, 1. 4.

*Draw me, we will run after thee.*

**T**Here are, as we have heard, several waies and means by which God is wont to draw the hearts of his people to himself, I have mentioned five already.

There is one thing more, which indeed is one of the principal means by which God draws the hearts of his people to himself; I shall speak to that, and then come to the Use and Application of the Point.

6. The sixth means therefore is this, God draws his people by the *secret touches* of his Spirit, and by the *impression* of divine power upon their hearts, *Cant. 5. 4. My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him. My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door;* that is, he gave me a *secret touch* by



by the *finger* of his *Spirit*. The *Spirit* of God is sometimes called the *finger* of God, and that plainly appears if we compare two Scriptures together, *Luke* 11. 20. with *Matth.* 12. 28. in one place, it is said, *If I by the finger of God cast out Devils* : In the other place it is said, *If I cast out Devils by the Spirit of God*. The *Spirit* of God then is called the *finger* of God. So likewise the *hand* of God denotes the power of God, *Exod.* 15. 11. *Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power*. And this expression, *the hand* of God, is sometimes used to set forth the cause of mens conversion, together with the effect of it, the *saving work* of the *Spirit* of God upon the hearts of men, *Acts* 11. 21. *And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord*. So that this is the plain meaning, *Christ put forth his hand by the hole of the door*, that is, he gave the Church a *secret touch* by the *finger* of his *Spirit*. What followed upon this, what was the effect of this? that which followed was this, *My bowels were moved for him*, the Churches affections were presently quickened and raised by this touch, though

Verse 26.

though she was dead, listless, and indisposed before, one touch of the Spirit quickened and raised her affections, *Ezek. 36. 27. I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes.* The Lord had promised to give a *new heart*, and a *new spirit* before this; in the *Verse* before it is said, *A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you*; and yet over and above this, the Lord promiseth, *I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my Statutes.* When God promiseth to give a new Heart, and a new Spirit, that which is intended by it, is the *work of the Spirit* upon the heart, framing the New creature in us, *Joh. 3. 5. Unless a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*; and yet although there be a *new heart*, and a *new spirit* given to us, and formed in us, by the Spirit of God; yet over and above this God must *put his spirit into us, and cause us to walk in his Statutes*; and this plainly shews, that the *habits* of Grace are not sufficient of themselves, without *actual grace*, to carry us forth to any act of obedience, for what need is there that God should

should promise to put his Spirit into us, and cause us to walk in his Statutes, after he had before promised the new heart and new spirit, if the habits of grace of themselves had been sufficient to carry us out to all spiritual actions? But now the Lord promiseth to put his Spirit within us, and cause us to walk in his Statutes, and that we shall keep his Judgements and doe them, and what doth he intend by all this? Certainly thus much, that he will not only give us the habits of grace, but he will put his Spirit into us, as a constant Spring to feed and maintain his own grace in us, and that he will act us by his Spirit: He will give us that actual grace by his Spirit, that shall help us to make use of those habits of grace that he hath planted in us, Rom. 8. 14. *As many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the Children of God.* The Children of God then are led by the Spirit of God, the Spirit of God is no stranger in the hearts of the Children of God. No, as many as are the Children of God, are guided, led and acted by the Spirit of God. Hence is it that we read of the power that worketh in us, Ephes. 3. 20. *according to the power that worketh in us.*

There

There is a power that is continually *working* in the heart of the Saints, and by this power it is, that they are drawn to God. God draws the hearts of his people by the *visits* of his Spirit, and by the *fresh gales* of divine grace. Look as a *ship* that is under a *fresh gale* can *speed* her course amain : so when the Saints are under *new and fresh gales* of the Spirit, then they find their hearts drawn out towards God, and carried forth in the waies of God, *Psa. 119. 132. I will run the way of thy Commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.* God must first *enlarge* our hearts before we can *run* the way of his *Commandments*. When the Spirit of God *enlarges* the heart, and *fills* the *sails*, then the soul can *run* and *move swiftly* towards God. Thus have I shewn the several waies by which God is wont to draw the hearts of his people to himself.

I come now to the Application of the Doctrine. And

*Use 1.*

1. The first Use shall be by way of *information*.

Let us learn that it is possible for the *Saints* themselves to fall under *spiritual dullness* and deadness. The Church we

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see here in the *Text*, finds her self in such a frame, as that she needs divine grace to draw and quicken her. Now unless she had some sense of *spiritual dullness* and *deadness* that was come upon her, there had been no such necessity for her to pray for these drawings : But this is an Argument that the Church found her heart more indisposed to the waies of God than heretofore, and that is the reason she prays that she might be drawn. Sad experience shews it to be true, that after we have felt the most *lively* and *effectual* workings of the Spirit of God in our hearts, after we have had the greatest *tastes* of *spiritual joys* and *comforts*, after our hearts have been most *inlarged* in *holy affections* towards God, yet oftentimes we fall into *spiritual deadness* and *dullness* ; we do not feel that *life* and *power* in our souls as heretofore, there is a greater indisposedness and listlessness in us to holy duties ; we are not so *lively* in holy duties, our affections are not so *stirring* and *working* towards God, we have not that *relish* in the promises, we do not so *rejoice* in them, we are not so *active* for God, we are not so fruitful in our places, we have not that hatred of sin, neither  
do

do we make that resistance against it, as sometimes we have done. All these things and more that might be instanced in, do shew, that oftentimes the best of Gods Children do fall under *deadness* of heart, and spiritual dullness. Now the *Causes* of this spiritual dullness and deadness are commonly such as these.

1. *Unthankfulness* for grace received. *Unthankfulness* is a greater sin, and costs us dearer than we are aware of; God takes nothing more unkindly at the hands of his people, than their unthankfulness for his own grace bestowed upon them. When we are not sensible how much God hath done for us in giving us his grace, this doth many times provoke God to take away his grace from us, and then we soon fall under this spiritual deadness and dullness.

2. A second Cause of *dullness* and *deadness* in the Saints is this, *Neglect* of some of the *means* of grace, either in *publick* or *private*. If we neglect any one of the means of grace, we shall soon find dullness and deadness come upon us; for this is certain, the infinite wise God hath appointed no one means of grace in vain. And so naturally dull  
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and dead are our hearts, that there is not one of the means of grace but we need it. Therefore if we neglect any of the means; if we attend *publick ordinances*, and in the mean time are negligent in private Prayer, reading the Word, meditating of it, and *self-examination*, this may be one cause of *deadness*. On the other hand, if we use private means, as *Prayer, Meditation*, and the like, if we neglect *publick* means, or any of the Ordinances which God hath appointed; if we come to hear the Word, but neglect the Sacrament, or any one instituted means which God hath appointed for our help, that may bring this deadness on us. For it is certain, we need all the means of grace, and the more we come to understand our own hearts, the more we are concerned about our *spiritual state*, the more we shall see our need of all the means which God hath appointed for our help and quickening. And if we consult our own experience, we shall find that when we are most remiss in the use of the *means*, then doth *spiritual deadness* and dullness come upon us.

4. Another Cause of this *spiritual dullness*.

Heb. 3. 13.

*dullness and deadness* is some *secret corruptions* that we indulge in our selves. *Exhort one another*, saith the Apostle, *lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.* Sin is a *deceitful thing*, and will *harden* the heart; any sin *convinced at, beloved and entertained* will *harden* the heart: When that *Love* that should be let out to God and the waies of God is turned aside to a lust, that must needs *harden* the heart. Besides any sin *indulged*, grieves the Spirit of God: the Spirit of God is not wont to take occasion to withdraw because of sins of infirmity; but if any sin be indulged and allowed, and get some liking and consent in the will, and be harboured by us, this grieves the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of God being grieved soon retires, and when the Spirit withdraws and retires, spiritual dullness and deadness must needs follow.

5. Another great Cause of this spiritual dullness and deadness that comes upon the hearts of the Saints, is, *Inordinate affections* to earthly things. The strength of the affections cannot go forth two waies at once; therefore if the affections be carried out violently, impetuously



impetuously, and beyond their due bounds towards earthly things, they cannot be carryed out with that vigour towards God and the waies of God as they ought to be. It is the *violence* and *impetuoufness* of our affections unto other things, that puts such a damp upon them in reference to God and the things of God: let us look unto our own experience and we shall find it to be true.

5. And lastly, Another Cause of this *dullness* and *deadness*, is, *resting* in the grace that we have received, and *presuming* on it, because we have had such *quicknings*, such enlargements in duty; because we have found some affections towards God, we think we can command the same quickenings, the same enlargements, the same affections at our pleasure. Now when we rest in what we have already received, and think we have quickening and enlargement at command, this causeth the Spirit to withdraw from us, and then we soon fall into spiritual deadness and dullness. These are usually the causes of the spiritual deadness and dullness that comes upon the Saints. Now we

ought not to give way to this spiritual deadness and dullness, but to pray and strive much against it. Holy souls, the more grace they have, the more sensible they are of this spiritual deadness and dullness, when it comes upon them. And the more grace a man hath, he will complain more of these inward decays of his soul, and the spiritual deadness that comes upon him, than he doth of outward afflictions. This was the Churches complaint, *Isa. 63. 17. why hast thou made us to erre from thy waies, and hardened our hearts from thy fear?* She complains of the withdrawals of divine grace, and that spiritual deadness and hardness that was come upon her. It were happy for us if we could be more sensible of the dullness and deadness that comes upon our affections, than we are of our outward afflictions; But alas, a little outward affliction touches us to the quick, and makes us to complain very bitterly; but how little sensible are we of our deadness and dullness in the waies of God, and of the loss of that spiritual vigour and liveliness that formerly we have had? Certainly,

ly, this *deadness* and *dullness* of spirit is a *great evil*, a *sore evil*.

1. This deadness of spirit renders the *graces* which are in us, for the *present*, in a great measure useles. It was the saying of Mr. *Greenham*, *Deadness of spirit is the Grave of many heavenly graces*. The graces of the Spirit of God are *buried*, as it were, by this dullness and deadness of heart. When we are under the power of this *dullness*, the grace that we have received, can neither be beneficial unto others, nor comfortable to our selves. The more grace is *visible* in us, the more benefit do others receive by it, and the more comfort do we our selves reap from it. If grace be not *visible*, as others receive little benefit by us, so we our selves cannot reap the comfort of grace in our selves. Now whilest our hearts are dead and dull, there is little *visibilty* of grace in us; so that whether we respect others *benefit* or our own *comfort*, it concerns us to strive against this dullness and deadness of heart.

2. As we deprive our selves of the comfort of grace, and others of the  
Cc 2                      benefit

## The Evil of *Spiritual Deadness.*

benefit of it by this *deadness* and *dullness*: so we rob God of his glory, *For hereby (saies our Saviour) is my Father glorified, that you bring forth much fruit.* The more active and lively grace is in us, the more glory hath God from us, and therefore by consequence, when we are dead and dull, and our graces unactive in us, God hath little honour from us.

3. *Spiritual dullness* and *deadness* in our selves *neglected*, makes way for *security*, and security is the high-way to some worse evil. Therefore it concerns us to strive against *spiritual deadness* and *dullness* in the *beginning*, for if we neglect it, we shall by degrees fall into security, and when we are secure we may soon be surprized by some *gross* and *scandalous sin* before we are aware. *Awake, O Christian, rouse up thy self strongly* when ever thou findest thy self dull in the waies of God, awake out of thy *security*, for security prepares the way for some fall, for some foul fall, if thou do not strive to prevent it; *deadness* brings on *security*, and security makes way for thy fall, some *great fall*, unless grace prevent.

4. *Lastly,*

4. *Lastly*, To ingage us to strive against this *deadness*, Consider, a constant *deadness* and *flatness* of spirit renders a mans state very *doubtful* and *suspicious*. It renders a mans state very doubtful whether he be in the state of grace, yea or no. It was Christs charge against one of the Churches, *Revel. 3. 2. Thou hast a name to live but art dead.* When there is an *habitual deadness* upon the heart, when there is no life, no vigorous affections towards God, and this continues, and there is no groaning under it, no striving against it, a man may well suspect whether his state be right, yea or no.

Upon all these grounds it concerns us much to strive against this spiritual deadness. The *Church* was under deadness here in the Text, but she did not lie down under her deadness; but the sense she had of her deadness and dullness, makes her pray, *Draw me.* So the sense that we have of that deadness and dullness, that too often comes upon us, should make us pray much for *quickenings* and *exciting* grace

## The Evil of spiritual Deadness.

The next Use is of *Exhortation*. This should exhort us to pray much for the *Drawings* of divine grace. Let us take the same course that the Church here doth in the Text. Let us pray much as she did, *Draw me, we will run after thee*. Truly, the more acquaintance we have with our own hearts, the greater insight we have into our spiritual estate, the more need shall we see of the constant quickenings and excitations of divine grace. How low and dead, and unactive shall we find our hearts to be in the waies of God, any further than we are under fresh and constant gales of the Spirit of God? Although we have found great quickening heretofore, and have had our hearts very much enlarged and drawn out towards God, unless we have a *continuation* of *divine grace*, we shall soon find that our hearts will flagg. Holy souls are most sensible not only of the need of grace, but also of the *continuation* of that grace which at present actsthem, without which they perceive their hearts would soon flagg and fail. The Lord promiseth his Church, that he *will water*

*water her every moment*, and truly Isa. 27. 3. we shall find that we need to be watered every moment. The least suspension of divine grace will soon make a decay in us.

But here it may be said, What course ought we to take, and what *Directions* may there be given in order to the obtaining of *fresh gales* of the Spirit, and *continued* supplies of *divine grace*. I take this to be a material Point a little to insist upon.

For what so desirable to holy souls as this, to feel *frequent visits* from God in their souls? to be under *fresh gales* of the Spirit? and to have *constant supplies* of grace? Therefore I shall speak something by way of Direction, how we may attain these continued supplies of divine grace.

1. We must be very *thankful* for grace received, *To him that hath*, Mat. 25. 29. faith our Saviour, *shall be given, and he shall have abundance*: the way to receive more grace, is, to be exceeding thankful for grace received. Nothing provokes God to withhold grace from us more than unthankfulness. *But Hezekiah rendered not according to the bene-*

fit done unto him, therefore wrath was upon him, 2 Chron. 32. 25. It is true, it was a temporal deliverance that *Hezekiah* was unthankful for: But if unthankfulness for a temporal mercy, for a temporal deliverance, provoke God so much, what will unthankfulness for the receipt of spiritual and divine grace do? The gifts of divine grace are the choicest of the gifts of God. *The good of one grace is a greater good than the good of Nature, even of the whole Universe.* So then when we are unthankful for so choice and excellent a gift as grace is, this provokes God much: Therefore if we would have more grace, let us be exceeding thankful for grace received. O make much of the influences of divine grace, prize them at a high rate. Believe it, you cannot command grace when you please, you cannot command the same quickenings, enlargements, and affections towards God (as sometime you have had) when you please; therefore when God gives you any of the visits of the Spirit, value them, and have the highest esteem of them, you cannot have them when you would, you

*Bonum unius  
gratie est ma-  
jus Bonum Bo-  
no natura, etiam  
totius universi.  
Aquinas.*



you have them not at your command, and the way to have them *continued*, is, to be sensible how great a mercy it is to enjoy them, and to be very thankful for them.

2. If you would have constant supplies of geace, take heed of *glorying* and *resting* in grace received: *what hast thou, that thou didst not receive, and if thou hast received it, why dost thou boast as if thou hadst not received it?* 1 Cor. 4. 7. If we think we have a *stock* already in our own hands, and that we need not be beholding to God for more, this is the ready way to make God suspend the influences of grace from us. It is true, it is the duty of a *Christian* to *stir up* the grace of God that is in him, (*Stir up the gift of God that is in thee, saith Paul to Timothy*). 2 Tim. 1. 6. O but take heed that you do not rest in *grace received*, as if you could act in the power of that, without new supplies of grace. God will keep us in constant dependence.

3. If we would have constant supplies of grace, We must keep our *eye* much, and *live* much upon the *fountain of grace*: In *Christ* are all our *fresh*

## Means to attain constant

*fresh Springs found, Psal. 87. last. All my fresh Springs are in thee. Abide in me, and I in you, saith our Saviour, Joh. 15. 4. Happy soul is he that hath learnt the skill of a constant dependence upon Christ. It is a great promise, Joh. 7. 37. He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters. If we maintain our dependence upon Christ, we shall never want supplies of grace. It is likewise another choice and precious promise, Joh. 4. 14. He that shall drink of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. He that shall drink of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst: what's the meaning of that, never thirst? shall he not thirst at all? shall believers never thirst? that seems not to be the meaning of it: But the plain meaning seems to be, he shall never thirst, so as not to be satisfied, he shall not remain unsatisfied when he thirsts. And this the following words explain and make out to be the meaning, He that*  
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*drinks of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst, Why so? The water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.* He that hath a well of water alwaies by him, need never thirst, Why, so, saith our Saviour, he that lives upon me and that Fountain of grace that is in me, he need not thirst, because he hath the Fountain of grace alwaies at hand, alwaies by him, to which he may have recourse. If we keep our eye upon the *Lord Jesus the fountain of grace*, we need never want grace, for he will be sure to give out grace to us at all times, and upon all occasions suitable to our *necessities* : It is a great Text, *Ephes. 1. 22. God hath given him to be Head over all things, to his body the Church.* Christ is given to be a Head over all things, that is, a Head to all *intents and purposes*, to all *ends* and uses whatsoever. There are no wants or necessities we can come under, but Christ is appointed for a *Head* to us to supply us in those necessities.

4. We must take heed of those things that may *hinder* and *obstruct* the *influences* and *operations* of divine grace. There are several obstructions that do hinder the influences of grace which we ought carefully to avoid, as we would have the constant supplies of divine grace.

1. One Obstruction that hinders the influence of divine grace, is, *coldness* and *remissness* in our *desires* after grace. *God fills the hungry with good things, but the rich he sends empty away,* Luke 1. 53. If we observe it, we shall find that the *Promises* run much to *thirsting*: *If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink*; so, *If any man thirst, let him drink of the water of life freely.* And, *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, they shall be filled.* So that we see the *Promises* are made much to *thirsting*. Now if our desires are *cold* and *low*, if we ask grace with a *spirit of indifferency*, being little concerned whether we receive grace yea or no; this is the ready way to go without grace. *Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find,*

Joh. 7. 37.

Rev. 22. 17.

Matth. 5. 6.

Matth. 7. 7.

find, knock and it shall be opened to you. Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it. The more our desires are enlarged after grace, the greater communication of grace shall we receive from God.

2. Another Obstruction of divine grace, is, *spiritual Pride*. If you would have constant supplies of grace, take heed of *spiritual Pride* and *secret liftings* up of soul, after grace received. If our hearts swell in pride, and grow big with the conceit of our own excellencies upon grace received, this is the way for God to suspend and with-hold grace from us, for *God resists the Proud, but giveth grace to the humble*. Nothing is a greater enemy to our graces, or our comforts than *spiritual pride*. You that desire to maintain your communion with God, above all watch against *this corruption*, for that will hinder your communion with God and obstruct farther communications of grace from him.

3. Another Obstruction of grace, is, *Non-improvement* of grace received, *not complying* with those motions

ons of the Spirit of God we have already had. If we have had the motions of the Spirit of God provoking us, and putting us forward to what is *good*, checking us and warning us against what is *evil* and *sinful*, and we do not comply with these motions, how can we expect farther assistance from the Spirit of God? The Spirit of God is most free and liberal in the communication of his grace, where it is kindly dealt with, where his motions are obeyed and followed. But if we do not make use of what grace we have already received from the Spirit of God, how can we expect farther Grace from him?

4. Another Obstruction of *divine grace*, is, *Guilt lying upon the Conscience*. Whilest any sin lyes unpardoned, &c. whilest there is any matter of *difference* between God and us, this may cause God to suspend divine grace.

This is certain, That *David* by his *fall* had lost that *presence* and *familiarity* of the Spirit of God with him, which he had before his *fall*; and therefore

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therefore he prayes, *Psal. 51. 11. Take not thy holy Spirit from me.* The Spirit of God was so far departed from him, that he was afraid of losing the Spirit of God quite and clean, so in the twelfth *Verse*, *Uphold me with thy free Spirit.* He did not feel that *power* and *presence*, and *energy* of the Spirit of God in his heart, as he was wont to do. If the Spirit of God have taken any offence and distast at us, by reason of any miscarriage of ours, that offence must be removed, and the Spirit of God treated very kindly before he will return again. *Ezek. 39. last Verse*, the Lord promiseth there that he will *no more hide his face from the house of Israel*, for he had poured out his Spirit upon them. *Neither will I hide my face any more from them, for I have poured out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God.* Observe it, Gods pouring out of his Spirit, is a sign that he is reconciled to us, it is a sign of reconciliation, and we cannot expect that God should pour out his Spirit upon us, so as that we should find that  
free

free and familiar operation of the Spirit of God in our hearts, till all things be clear between God and us; therefore the guilt of any sin lying on the conscience *unpardoned*, may obstruct the communications of *Divine Grace*, and may hinder that *intimate, familiar presence* of the Spirit of God which sometimes we have had.

Eph. 2. 22.

5. Another Obstruction of divine grace, is, some corruption or sin *indulged* and continued in. The Saints are said to be an *habitation of God by the Spirit*. Now the Spirit of God loves a *pure and chaste habitation*. If we *sully* and *defile* our souls by the *love* of any sin, by *indulging* our selves in any corruption, we render our hearts a very *unfit habitation* for that pure and holy Spirit to dwell in. *Know you not*, saith the Apostle, *that your bodyes are the Temple of the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in you*, 1 Cor. 6. 19. Our *Souls* and *Bodies* are the *Temple* of the Holy Ghost, and certainly if we defile this Temple of the Holy Ghost, we cannot expect that the Spirit of God will make his residence in it, *Prov. 1. 23. Turn*

• you



you at my reproof, behold I will pour out my Spirit upon you. If the Spirit of God rebuke us for any sin, we ought presently to take this rebuke; If the Spirit of God give us a secret hint and intimation that such a thing is *amiss*, we ought to reform that thing, we ought to take such a hint, and what then? then God will pour out his Spirit upon us. But if we retain the love of sin, and persist, and go on in sin, after God hath rebuked and check'd us for it, we cannot expect that God will pour out his Spirit upon us: For the *Promise runs*, Turn ye at my reproof, and I will pour out my Spirit upon you; not otherwise: so that if we retain the love of sin, after God hath check'd and rebuked us for it, we cannot expect the communication of divine grace.

*Lastly*, The last impediment of divine grace that I shall mention, is, *security* and *presumption* of our own strength and sufficiency. If we think we have a stock in our own hand, and have quickening and enlargement at command, and can act at our own

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pleasure

pleasure in the waies of God without Divine Assistance, nothing provokes God sooner to withdraw his grace from us.

These are the *impediments* and *obstructions* of divine grace. Now if we would have constant supplies of grace, we must take heed of all those things that obstruct the *passage* of grace, and do hinder the communication of it to our souls.

*The end of the Eighteenth Sermon.*

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# SERMON XIX.

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Solomon's Song, 1. 4.

*Draw me, we will run after thee.*

**T**Here is one *Doctrin*e more which lies in the words, which yet remains to be spoken to, and that is this,

*Doct. 3. The end why we should desire the drawings of divine grace, it is, that our hearts may be the more carryed forth after God. Draw me, saith the Church, and we will run after thee.* The end why the Church desires to be *drawn*, is, that her heart may be *carryed* forth the more after Christ.

Here we have two things to speak unto.

1. What the *import* of the phrase is, what this *running* doth imply, *Draw me, we will run after thee.*

**Rd** 2

2. How

2. How it is that the Saints have their hearts *carried out* after God.

1. What this *phrase* of *running* doth import : *Running* notes several things.

1. It notes *quickness* and *liveliness* of *affection*, *Draw me, we will run after thee*, that is, our *affections* shall then be *elevated* and *enlarged* towards thee. *Love* is the *foot* of the soul. The feet are the *instruments* of *motion*, the feet are they that carry us from one place to another; thus the soul by its *affections* is carried forth to the object that it loves. *Running* therefore notes the *raisedness* of the *affections*. Thus we read how *Elisha* run after *Elijah*, *1 Kings* 19. 20. *He left the Oxen and run after Elijah*, that is, his *affections* were now up and he must needs follow *Elijah*. So that *running* notes the *elevation* of the *affections*: when the *affections* that were *dead* and *lumpish* before, begin to *move* and *spring* afresh towards God, *Cant.* 6. 12. *Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the Chariots of Amminadab*. Many make these to be the words

Am. 6. 2. Ps.  
Asina,

*may be carryed forth after Christ.*

words of *Christ* to the *Church*. But some there are that make these to be the words of the *Church* to *Christ*. *Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the Chariots of Aminadab.* And if so, then it notes the spiritual motion and affection that was in the *Church* towards *Christ*. *Her soul made her as the Chariots of Aminadab*, that is, her affections did move swiftly towards *Christ*. *Draw me, we will run after thee.* *Running* here in the *Text* is opposed to *deadness*, the *Church* found her affections flat and dead before, therefore she prays to be drawn by divine grace. Now when she is drawn, she saith, she *will run*, that is, she shall have *new affections*. Her affections that were dead and flat before, shall now be quick and lively towards God and *Christ*.

2. *Running* notes *progress* in *Faith* and *Holiness*, Gal. 5. 7. *Ye did run well, who did hinder you?* the meaning is, you once did make a good progress in the *Faith*, but now ye are slidden back. A Christian ought alwaies to make a progress, Col. 1. 10.

416 *Saints desire Grace, that their hearts*

*Non progredi  
regredi.*

*Pet. 2. 15.*

*Increasing in the knowledge of God,  
2 Pet. 3. 18. Grow in grace, and  
in the knowledge of our Lord and  
Saviour Jesus Christ. Not to go  
forward is to go backward. A  
Christian is seldom at a stand,  
if he be not going forward, he  
is going backward, he is declin-  
ing. Now a Christian ought to  
run, that is, he ought to make  
a farther progress. Add to your  
Faith vertue, and to your vertue  
knowledge, and to knowledge tempe-  
rance, and to temperance patience, and  
to patience godliness, and to godliness  
brotherly kindness, and to brotherly  
kindness charity : So likewise, For-  
getting the things that are behind,  
and reaching forth unto those things  
which are before, Phil. 3. 13. No-  
thing hinders our spiritual growth  
more than a vain conceit in us, that  
we know as much already, as need  
to be known, and that we have at-  
tained already as much as we need  
to attain unto. Paul was of another  
temper when he saies, Not as if I  
had already attained, either were al-  
ready perfect, but I press towards the  
mark*

*may be carried forth after Christ.*

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*mark for the price of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, Phil. 3. 12, 14. To run therefore is to make a progress, not to take up with any measures of grace already received, but to press forwards to that which we have not attained unto.*

3. *Running notes diligence and activity in the waies of God, 1 Cor. 9. 24. So run that ye may obtain, that is, run with care and diligence, put forth your utmost vigour and activity in the waies of God, Psal. 119. 32. I will run the waies of thy Commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart, that is, I shall be diligent and active in thy waies, when I have derived grace from thee.*

4. *Running notes strength and courage in him that runs, Dan. 8. 6. The He-goat is said to run to the Ram in the fury of his power: Running therefore notes strength and courage; so the Saints running in the waies of God, notes their strength and courage in the waies of God, Isa. 40. 31. They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount*

## How the Saints hearts are

*up with wings as Eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.*

5. And lastly, *Running* notes *perseverance* in our *Christian course* to the end, *Heb. 12. 1. Let us run with patience the race that is set before us.*

The second thing to be spoken to, is this, How it is that the Saints have their hearts *carried out after God*. The end why they desire *divine grace*, is, That they may *run* in a *spiritual manner*, and that their hearts may be *carried after God*. Now how is it that the Saints have their hearts *carried out after God*?

1. The Saints have their hearts *carried out after God by desires and longings after him*, *Psal. 63. 1. My soul thirsteth after thee, my flesh longeth for thee, Isa. 26. 8, 9. The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee*; and in the next Verse, *With my soul have I desired thee in the night, yea with my spirit within me will I seek thee early. Whilest other men do mainly and principally thirst and cover after the creature,*



creature, holy souls do mainly and principally thirst after God himself, *Psal. 42. 1. As the Hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.* The *Hart* is a thirsty creature by nature, and when it is hunted its thirst is greater, such is the thirst of holy souls after God.

But it may be said, What is that thirst that holy souls have after God?

It lies *eminently* in two things, and it will be good for us to observe them, because we may know much what the measure of our grace is by these two things; Holy souls thirst after Gods gracious presence here on earth; and they thirst after Gods glorious presence in Heaven.

1. Holy souls thirst after Gods gracious presence here on earth, *Psal. 42. 2. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God? when shall I come and appear before God?* that is, when shall I see the face of God in his Ordinances, *Psal. 101. 2. When wilt thou come unto me?* Nothing more proper to grace than this, to carry

carry out the soul in longings after communion with God. If you feel nothing of this in your selves, if you do not find *ardent, strong breathings* and longings in your souls after God, you have reason to suspect your selves that all is not well with you. Unless the soul be under *Temptation*, or under the *prevalency* of some corruption at the present, or under the withdrawings of the influences of the Spirit of God in some time of *Desertion*, I say, unless it be in such cases as these, the *pulse* of the soul will beat this way, *viz.* in *ardent breathings* after God and communion with him; and if we do not find it to be thus with us, we have reason to fear the state of our own souls, for thus it will be if grace act like it self in our hearts.

2. The Saints have great longings after the *sight* of God and the *glorious presence* of God in Heaven. *Come, come, is the language* of the Church in general, *The Spirit and the Bride say, come,* Revel. 22:17. Being confident and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with  
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*the Lord. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly,* is the language of particular Saints. Certainly the *pulse* of grace, if I may so express it, beats mainly these two waies: In longing after a sense of *Gods* presence in our souls here on earth; and in longing after the perfect injoyment of *God* in Heaven.

2. The Saints have their hearts carried out to *God* by *Love*. *Love* is the *motion* of the soul to the thing *beloved*. The soul naturally moves towards that it loves. *Love* is the *weight* or *ballance* of the soul, the soul is carried where it loves. Now the souls of the Saints are carried towards *God* by *Love*, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee?* And, *I will love thee, O Lord, my strength,* Psal. 18.1. *God* himself is the *great thing* in the eye of holy souls; though *friends* be dear, *relations* dear, yet *God* himself is *most dear*. *O Lord,* saith *Austin*, thou art not only dearer to me than this earth, and all things that are in it, but thou art more acceptable to me than Heaven it self, and all the things that are in it. Hence is that  
of

*Amor meus est  
pondus meum,  
ed feror, quò  
amo.*

Psal. 73. 25.

Letitia letitia-  
tum,

of David in *Psal. 43. 4.* *I will go to God my exceeding joy.* The joy of my joy, that is, the top of my joy. Though other things may be amiable to a godly man in their place, yet God himself is most amiable to an holy soul.

3. The Saints have their hearts carryed out to God by *Admiration*; that which we call *admiration*, is, the *fixing* or *staying* of the mind upon some *excellent object*; the minds *fixing* or *staying* it self *with delight* upon some object which it is pleased with. *Admiration* takes in a double act of the soul.

1. It takes in an act of the *mind* or *understanding*; what we admire the mind *fixeth* and *dwells* upon; *admiration detains* and *holds* the mind *fixt* in the *contemplation* of a thing; what we admire the mind doth not presently go off from, but it staies and dwells upon it.

2. *Admiration* takes in the act of the *will*; the will likes and is well pleased with the goodness of an object, and that makes the mind fix and stay upon it.

Thus

Thus the souls of the Saints are carried out to God by admiration; Holy souls love the *divine excellency*, and they are pleased in it, therefore the will causeth the mind or understanding to fix it self in the contemplation of it. *My meditation of him shall be sweet*, saith David. The Saints cannot alwaies get up their hearts to this frame of admiration, and it is matter of bitter complaint to holy souls, that they cannot find their hearts so taken with the *divine perfections*, as sometimes they have been; but this is certain, this is most pleasing to a holy soul when he finds his heart most taken and ravished with the excellencies of God, and when he can admire him more than all created things.

4. The Saints have their hearts carried out to God by *delight*. Delight carries the heart powerfully to the object we delight in, what we delight in we cannot but think of, *Psal. 119. 47. I will delight my self in thy Commandments, which I have loved*: As much as if he should have said, the love and affection which I have

*Psal. 104. 34.*

have to thy Commandments carries out my heart to them. Thus the Saints do sometimes find their hearts carryed out to delight in God, *Isa. 58. 14. Then shalt thou delight thy self in the Lord.* It is true, it is too seldom, too rare, that we can thus delight our selves in God, there is one thing or other that interposeth to hinder us from delighting in God; sometimes *guilt* interposeth, that *clogs* our consciences, and that hinders us from delighting in God. Sometimes inordinate affection to the creature steps in, and when our affections are diverted and turned into another channel, we cannot so delight in God as we ought to do. Sometimes *spiritual darknes* and *deadnes* hinders our delighting in God.

I. *Spiritual darknes* hinders us from delighting in God, we have lost that *sight* of God, we have lost those *apprehensions* of God, which sometimes we have had; and if we have lost that *sight of God*, and those apprehensions of God that once we had, no wonder we cannot delight in him, for our affections follow our  
 appre-

apprehensions, as we have heard.

2. *Spiritual deadness* hinders us. Our affections are flat and low, and we cannot get them up to God, so (that as was said) it is too seldom that we get our hearts into this frame to delight in God; but it is happy with the Saints when they can find it thus with them, it is never so well with them, as when they can have their hearts carried out with delight to God.

5. The Saints have their hearts carried out to God by *adherence*. When we can find our hearts intimately and firmly adhering to God, then are our hearts carried out to him. *It is good for me to draw near to God*, Psal. 73. 28. It is good for me to *adhere to God*, so the words are rendred by learned men; so Psal. 63. 8. *My soul followeth hard after thee*. This *following hard after God*, implies two things.

1. Strong desires after God. And

2. Intimate adhering or cleaving of the soul to God, *My soul cleaves after thee*, that is, *my soul rests securely in thee*, saith a learned man.

*Bonum est mihi  
adherere Deo.*

*Adhaeret anima  
mea post te, hoc  
est, vita securus  
acquiesco.*

My

*My soul cleaves after thee*, it is as much as if it had been said, Whilest I think of *thee* and of thy *mercy* towards me, although thou seemest sometimes as if so be thou wouldest withdraw thy self from me, yet I go after thee, I follow after thee in thy very foot-steps, I follow thee so close that I may never let thee go out of my sight. To *cleave after another*, saith a learned man, it is to follow another in his foot-steps. Ainsworth observes, that this phrase notes Love, constancy, and union in the Spirit, he that *cleaves to the Lord* is of one Spirit, 1 Cor. 6. 17. *My soul cleaves*, that is, it cleaves intimately and inseparably to thee.

*Adhaerere post  
aliquem nihil  
aliud esse videtur  
quam vestigiis  
fugientis inhaere.*

6. And lastly, The Saints have their hearts carryed forth towards God in a way of *satisfaction*, Psal. 63. 5. *My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness*. He is speaking of communion with God: If he can have but communion with God, oh then his soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness. Nothing can terminate the desires of the soul but an infinite good. When the soul hath taken

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in this and that particular good from among the Creatures, it finds it is still capable of more, and therefore is still desiring more: but when the soul hath *met* with such a good, as that it can never come to the end and bottom of it, then it is *satisfied* and *filled*. Now there is good enough in God to *fill* the soul, and there is something still *redundant*, and therefore it is in God alone, that the Saints find satisfaction, and to him it is they are carryed out, so as to seek *satisfaction* in him.

The *first Use*, is, for Application. *Use 1.*  
Let us be exhorted to *labour* and *pray* that we may *experimentally* find our hearts thus carryed out after God, by *Desire, Love, Admiration, Delight, Adherence, satisfaction*. O let us put it to the Trial, and we shall find it true in *experience*, the more we can find our hearts thus carryed out after God, the more sweetness shall we find in this life. It is *good* for me to *draw near* to God. We shall find it the *wisest course* to have our hearts *fixt* and *centred* in God. It is *natural* to us all to seek for *rest*. Men  
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are seeking far and near to find rest; but we may *wander* up and *down* all our daies, and never find what we seek and pursue after, unless the pursuit of our souls be after God. God alone is the *true* rest of souls, the *quiet* and *center* of souls, the more our hearts are carryed out after God, the more rest shall we find. The end of *motion* is *rest*; the end why we move towards the Creatures in desire and love, is, because we think to find some rest and contentment in them. Now if our souls be carryed out after God in holy affections, there, and there only shall we find that rest that our souls are longing after. Take this for a certain truth, It will never be well with us, we shall never find rest to our souls till we have learned this skill to keep our hearts *reserved* for God, and to expect happiness from nothing but him. Though we may and ought to use the Creatures in their place yet we must still expect all our happiness from God. Take the best comfort, the best condition in this world, yet there is not *all the good* in it we desire. There  
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is something that is *wanting* still ; something that we *cannot find* in any creature, and in any condition. Examine your selves and you will find it so : Therefore it is not good that we expect to find happiness in any thing under the Sun, for if we do, we shall certainly deceive our selves : But if we place our happiness in God, he will not deceive us, *Psal. 62. 6, 7. My soul wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from him, he only is my rock and my Salvation, he is my defence, I shall not be moved.* The more our souls are carryed out after God, the more rest we shall find. Not but that we may desire and love the Creatures in their places, but take heed of expecting to find rest in them, and of expecting happiness in any thing but God. O let us labour to learn this skill, (and happy are they that can learn it) to keep our hearts reserved for God as our only happiness, and to learn to expect happiness from nothing but him.

Let us be exhorted to pray for Divine Grace, as the means whereby our hearts may be thus *drawn* out to God, *Draw me, we will run after thee ;* the  
Ec 2                      Church

Church prays to be drawn that she may run after Christ. Before we are drawn, our affections cannot run out after Christ. When we find our hearts dead, unapt to move towards God, then should we pray for the drawings of divine grace. It is the saying of *Austin*, Lord, do thou quicken, and stir up our hearts, do thou call back our hearts to thy self, do thou inflame them, do thou ravish them and allure them, do thou set them on fire, do thou sweeten and indear thy self to us. Now, now let us run and love. Truly till divine grace doth excite, inflame, allure, and set our hearts on fire, we shall find we cannot run after Christ. How often do we find a great weight and mighty clog lying on our souls, that we cannot ascend to God as we would? We should pray therefore that God would remove this weight, that he would quicken our hearts by the drawing of his Spirit. O when our souls are carryed forth with life and vigour towards God, then shall we find rest and sweetness, and peace to our souls. On the contrary, when our hearts are estranged from God, when our affections

*Age Domine &  
fac, excita & re-  
voca nos, accende  
& raze, flagra;  
Dulceas, jam  
amemus & cur-  
amus. Aug.*

are flat and dead towards him, we shall find nothing but trouble and disquietment, *restlesnes* and *dissatisfaction* in our souls. *Return to thy rest, O my soul*, saith that *holy man*. God alone is the *rest* of souls; so far as our hearts are carryed out with *life* and *vigour* towards God, we shall find *rest*, *peace*, and *quiet* to our soul; so far as we depart from him, we shall find nothing but trouble and disquietment: Therefore let us pray with the Church here, *Draw me, we will run after thee.*

*Psal. 116. 7.*

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